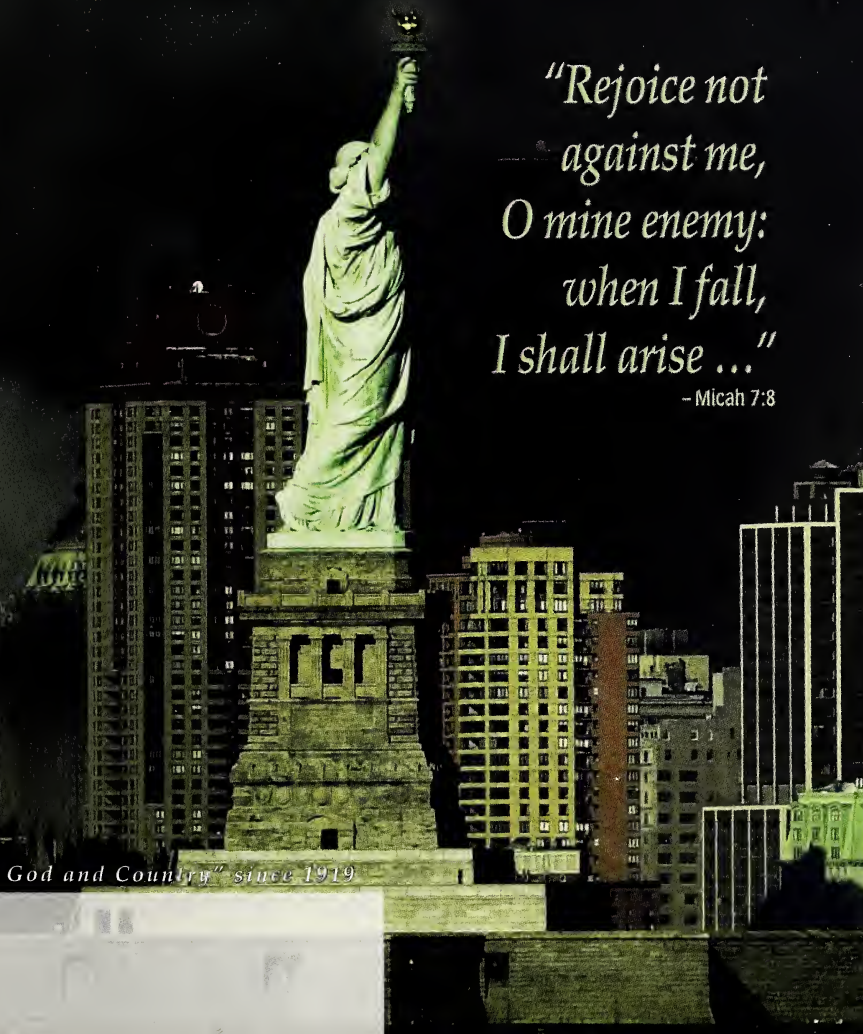


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\$2.50 NOVEMBER 2001

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THE AMERICAN Legion

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For God and Country

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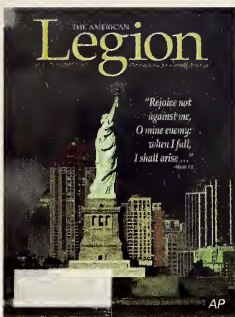
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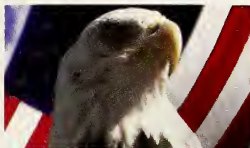
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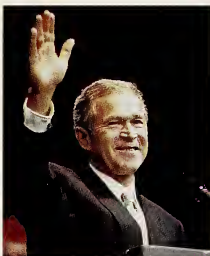
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"Amid the smoking ruins of the Twin Towers one could make out the Statue of Liberty holding high the torch of freedom. It is freedom's flame that the terrorists sought to extinguish. But it is that same torch that can lead the free world to crush the forces of terror."

— Benjamin Netanyahu



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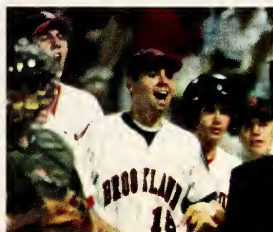
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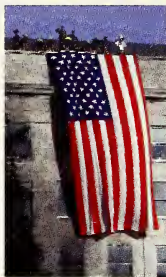
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Flag needs protection

If there were ever a time to push for the protection of our flag, this is it. Under the banner of our flag, America has rallied against the terrorists who killed so many Americans in New York and Washington. I find it hard to believe that any member of Congress would dare to stand up and defeat our amendment, knowing the fervor of the American people for our symbol of freedom. Go get 'em.

— Martin Witt, Burlington, Mass.



America united

Congratulations, bin Laden. You've united the American people in a way no one would have thought possible in the past 50 years.

Incidentally, if the Navy has any use for a 68-year-old retired guy who can type and has picked up some computer skills, I'd love to serve again on a destroyer as a yeoman. I'd accept such an offer in a New York minute.

— Donald C. Lehmkuhl, Fairfield Township, Ohio

Seal nation's borders

Americans are killed while in a dozen countries those supporting the terrorists dance and sing. We have been too lenient with those who hate us and want to do us harm.

Congress must close the borders to the United States until we get a handle on who's inside our country. If other nations don't like it, tough. We should stop dealings of any kind with countries that engage in or support terrorism. If that doesn't get their attention, we should take the battle to them with our military.

Let terrorists be remembered for unleashing the wrath of the United States on their homelands and organizations. May they be wiped from the face of the earth.

— Don A. Bender, Glen Burnie, Md.

Where's the money?

We taxpayers ought to help New York with the enormous financial burden of cleaning up the destruction caused by terrorist attacks. What I keep wondering, though, is how we can scrape up \$20 billion to clean up the mess when we can't find the financial resources to provide affordable health insurance for every American.

I don't begrudge handing over my hard-earned tax dollars to make a down payment on the war on terrorism. I can't help wondering, though, why we can't come up with a few nickels and dimes to pay for prescription drugs for seniors.

We never seem to have the money to do what we ought to do, but we always seem to have the money to do what we are forced to do.

— Chuck Emerson-Henry, Hugo, Minn.

Keep up good work

I send my congratulations to *The American Legion Magazine* for a top-flight veterans' publication. This is especially true of the September issue, with its features "GI Joe: Person of the 20th Century," "America's Volunteer Warriors" and "Sister Soldiers."

I've seen a definite upgrade in the magazine over the past year with better articles and better layouts. Is this the result of new editors on board or perhaps better overview by senior Legion officials? Whatever it is, keep it up.

— Jack R. Olsen, Venice, Fla.

WE WANT YOUR OPINIONS

The American Legion Magazine welcomes letters concerning articles that appear in the publication. Be sure to include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters are subject to editing. Send your opinions to:

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A 'masterpiece'

The September issue, "A Salute to America's Heroes," is a masterpiece of journalism. It's terrific and is what all America needs to hear. This issue deserves to be in every school library so our children can know the truth. I'm impressed.

— Roy Wolford, Rochester, Ind.

A great surprise

Those of us who are women veterans sometimes feel overlooked, so Jay Stuller's article "Sister Soldiers" (September) was great fun to read. I was in the WAAC, WAC, Army Air Corps and the Air Force as we moved through that progression during World War II and the years immediately thereafter. I served two tours of duty in Japan and Korea and continued as a reservist during the Korean War. It's refreshing to know *The American Legion Magazine's* editorial staff sees women as an indispensable asset to the armed forces.

— Alba C. Thompson, Plymouth, Mass.

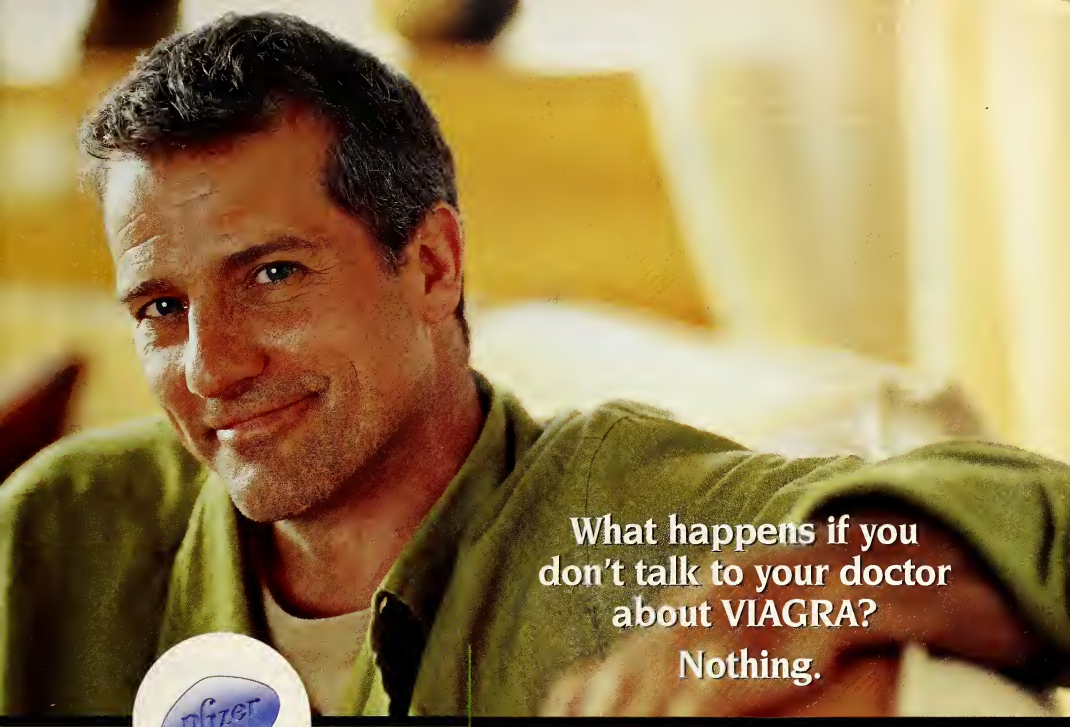


Women glue of family

What is the purpose of the nation's military? Isn't it the security of its citizens? Since the basic social unit is the family, what sense does it make to remove the glue that holds the family together — that is, the mother — for the protection of that unit?

The question isn't "Are women qualified for military jobs?" Rather, it's "Does the presence of women in the military best serve the country?" According to Jay Stuller's article "Sister Soldiers," 20 percent to 25 percent of the armed forces consists of women. It appears, then, that we're spending a lot of tax dollars on short-term personnel or that we're sentencing their children to motherless homes. Either way, the country suffers.

Women, due to their resiliency, courage and strength, have always pitched in and done the job. But with the exception of nurses in the services, this heroic assistance has always been given on a temporary basis for the duration of an emer-



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Discuss your general health status with your doctor to ensure that you are healthy enough to engage in sexual activity. If you experience chest pain, nausea, or any other discomforts during sex or an erection that lasts longer than 4 hours, seek immediate medical help. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less commonly bluish vision, blurred vision, or sensitivity to light may briefly occur.

Please see patient summary of information for VIAGRA (25-mg, 50-mg, 100-mg) tablets on the following page.



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This summary contains important information about **VIAGRA[®]**. It is not meant to take the place of your doctor's instructions. Read this information carefully before you start taking VIAGRA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to know more about VIAGRA.

This medicine can help many men when it is used as prescribed by their doctors. However, VIAGRA is not for everyone. It is intended for use only by men who have a condition called erectile dysfunction. **VIAGRA must never be used by men who are taking medicines that contain nitrates of any kind, at any time. This includes nitroglycerin. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe or life threatening level.**

What is VIAGRA?

VIAGRA is a pill used to treat erectile dysfunction (impotence) in men. It can help many men who have erectile dysfunction get and keep an erection when they become sexually excited (stimulated). You will not get an erection just by taking this medicine. VIAGRA helps a man with erectile dysfunction get an erection only when he is sexually excited.

How Sex Affects the Body

When a man is sexually excited, the penis rapidly fills with more blood than usual. The penis then expands and hardens. This is called an erection. After the man is done having sex, this extra blood flows out of the penis back into the body. The erection goes away. If an erection lasts for a long time (more than 6 hours), it can permanently damage your penis. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have a prolonged erection that lasts more than 4 hours.

Some conditions and medicines interfere with this natural erection process. The penis cannot fill with enough blood. The man cannot have an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction if it becomes a frequent problem. During sex, your heart works harder. Therefore sexual activity may not be advisable for people who have heart problems. Before you start any treatment for erectile dysfunction, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. If you have chest pains, dizziness or nausea during sex, stop having sex and immediately tell your doctor you have had this problem.

How VIAGRA Works

VIAGRA enables many men with erectile dysfunction to respond to sexual stimulation. When a man is sexually excited, VIAGRA helps the penis fill with enough blood to cause an erection. After sex is over, the erection goes away.

VIAGRA is Not for Everyone

As noted above (*How Sex Affects the Body*), ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough for sexual activity.

If you take any medicines that contain nitrates—either regularly or as needed—you should never take VIAGRA. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine or recreational drug containing nitrates, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get dizzy, faint, or even have a heart attack or stroke. Nitrates are found in many prescription medicines that are used to treat angina (chest pain due to heart disease) such as:

- nitroglycerin (sprays, ointments, skin patches or pastes, and tablets that are swallowed or dissolved in the mouth)
 - isosorbide mononitrate and isosorbide dinitrate (tablets that are swallowed, chewed, or dissolved in the mouth)
- Nitrates are also found in recreational drugs such as amyl nitrate or nitrite ("poppers"). If you are not sure if any of your medicines contain nitrates, or if you do not understand what nitrates are, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

VIAGRA is only for patients with erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for newborns, children, or women. Do not let anyone else take your VIAGRA. VIAGRA must be used only under a doctor's supervision.

What VIAGRA Does Not Do

- VIAGRA does not cure erectile dysfunction. It is a treatment for erectile dysfunction.
- VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from getting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV—the virus that causes AIDS.
- VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

What To Tell Your Doctor Before You Begin VIAGRA

Only your doctor can decide if VIAGRA is right for you. VIAGRA can cause mild, temporary lowering of your blood pressure. You will need to have a thorough medical exam to diagnose your erectile dysfunction and to find out if you can safely take VIAGRA alone or with your other medicines. Your doctor should determine if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had any heart problems (e.g., angina, chest pain, heart failure, irregular heart beats, or heart attack)
- have ever had a stroke

- have low or high blood pressure
- have a rare inherited eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa
- have ever had any kidney problems
- have ever had any liver problems
- have ever had any blood problems, including sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- are allergic to sildenafil or any of the other ingredients of VIAGRA tablets
- have a deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or ever had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have stomach ulcers or any types of bleeding problems
- are taking any other medicines

VIAGRA and Other Medicines

Some medicines can change the way VIAGRA works. Tell your doctor about **any medicines** you are taking. Do not start or stop taking any medicines before checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines or remedies. Remember, VIAGRA should never be used with medicines that contain nitrates (see *VIAGRA is Not for Everyone*). If you are taking a protease inhibitor, your dose may be adjusted (please see *Finding the Right Dose for You*). VIAGRA should not be used with any other medical treatments that cause erection. These treatments include pills, medicines that are injected or inserted into the penis, implants or vacuum pumps.

Finding the Right Dose for You

VIAGRA comes in different doses (25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg). If you do not get the results you expect, talk with your doctor. You and your doctor can determine the dose that works best for you.

- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor describes.
 - If you think you need a larger dose of VIAGRA, check with your doctor.
 - VIAGRA should not be taken more than once a day.
- If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking protease inhibitors, such as for the treatment of HIV, your doctor may recommend a 25 mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48 hour period.

How To Take VIAGRA

Take VIAGRA about one hour before you plan to have sex. Beginning in about 30 minutes and for up to 4 hours, VIAGRA can help you get an erection if you are sexually excited. If you take VIAGRA after a high-fat meal (such as a cheeseburger and french fries), the medicine may take a little longer to start working. VIAGRA can help you get an erection when you are sexually excited. You will not get an erection just by taking the pill.

Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines, VIAGRA can cause some side effects. These effects are usually mild to moderate and usually don't last longer than a few hours. Some of these side effects are more likely to occur with higher doses. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, flushing of the face, and upset stomach. Less common side effects that may occur are temporary changes in color vision (such as trouble telling the difference between blue and green objects or having a blue color tinge to them), eyes being more sensitive to light, or blurred vision. In rare instances, men have reported an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. It not treated right away, permanent damage to your penis could occur (see *How Sex Affects the Body*).

Heart attack, stroke, irregular heart beats, and death have been reported rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking this medicine. It is not possible to determine whether these events were directly related to VIAGRA.

VIAGRA may cause other side effects besides those listed on this sheet. If you want more information or develop any side effects or symptoms you are concerned about, call your doctor.

Accidental Overdose

In case of accidental overdose, call your doctor right away.

Storing VIAGRA

Keep VIAGRA out of the reach of children. Keep VIAGRA in its original container. Store at room temperature, 59°–86°F (15°–30°C).

For More Information on VIAGRA

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. Only your doctor can decide if it is right for you. This sheet is only a summary. If you have any questions or want more information about VIAGRA, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, visit www.viagra.com, or call 1-888-4VIAGRA. 25-5515-00-4 June 1999

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gency. Do women have a place in peacetime military service? Sure, but not at the expense of the family.

—Catherine Dillon, Manhasset, N.Y.

Sister she didn't know

I just finished reading the September issue. The articles were outstanding, especially "Sister Soldiers." When my husband was on shore duty in Washington, we spent time sightseeing. At the Smithsonian, we went to see a collection of memorabilia people have left at the Vietnam Wall over the years. I broke down and cried when I came across a full nurse's uniform that was left by the woman's devastated family. I felt as if I'd lost a sister who I didn't even know. So many times women aren't given credit for all they do for their families, much less their country. Thanks for reminding us of their importance.

—Jennifer M. Robinson, Bryan, Texas

Common bond hits home

I just finished reading National Commander Ray Smith's article "Veterans' Common Bond" (September). Having served during the height of the Cold War, I commend Smith for an eloquent piece that clearly summarizes most veterans' feelings about their military service.

The friendships I made during my own three-year Army service continue to the present day. I can say without hesitation that my friends then and the veterans I've met through organizations such as the Legion, the VFW and the Marine Corps League are among the best men with whom I've had the pleasure of association.

—Mike Norman, Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

No experience needed

I read George Will's article "The GI Gap" in the September issue. I came away with the feeling he was writing for a certain audience, and I wasn't in it.

He says, "At one point during the last administration, we had a president, a director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a secretary of defense, a secretary of state and a national security adviser—all five with zero military experience." I say, so what?

President Clinton is a Rhodes

Scholar. Personally, I think Rhodes Scholars are of a higher quality of intelligence than most officers in any branch of our military schools. Besides, it doesn't take a mental giant to set up a good working relationship with the military – control them, supply them and understand them. Having served is not important. Will reminds me of a war hawk.

—Edward Whalen, Salinas, Calif.

Kudos to Carroll

What a moving article by Jeff Stoffer about Andrew Carroll, the man who published a collection of war correspondence (“He Got Mail,” September). Thank God for Americans like Carroll.

—Val Eucare, Severna Park, Md.



A date to remember

The caption accompanying the photo of 28th Infantry Division troops marching down the Champs Elysees in Paris is wrong (“GI Joe: Person of the 20th Century,” September). I was in H Company, 109th Infantry, 28th Division, and we marched down the Champs Elysees on Aug. 29, 1944.

—Ivor McKay, Copperas Cove, Texas

Editor's note – The date of the Champs Elysees victory parade in Paris in the September issue was incorrect. We regret the error.

Some salute

I read the September issue from cover to page 64. There I threw it down in disgust. I don't know what others think, but I don't consider it a salute to America's heroes to have a picture of the ex-draft dodger in chief reviewing troops. If you remember, he once said he loathed the same people you honor.

—James W. Gibson, Anderson, Calif.

Casualties, not dead

In the September article “Memorial to a Generation,” Alan W. Dowd says 9,000 Allied soldiers died at Normandy on D-Day. That's incorrect. About 9,000 were killed or wounded. About

2,500 died. Dowd also says 70,000 U.S. soldiers died at the Battle of the Bulge. That's also incorrect. About 19,000 were killed and 50,000 wounded, for a total of 70,000 casualties.

—Paul Faist, Lakehurst, N.J.

Editor's note – Dowd's story should have stated that D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge resulted in 9,000 and 70,000 casualties, respectively. We regret the error.

Stop draft registration

I would like to commend Martin Anderson on his fine article “America's Volunteer Warriors” (September). The draft needed to go long before it did. During World War II, the need for military manpower was obvious, with a major war being fought on two fronts. But now, with no formidable enemy remaining for the United States, it is indeed time – nay, past time – to stop draft registration and return pride to military service by making it truly voluntary.

—Leland D. Sigley, Romoland, Calif.

Keep draft in place

I was taken aback by Martin Anderson's ideas concerning doing away with our nation's Selective Service registration requirements (“America's Volunteer Warriors,” September). I agree our all-volunteer force has worked well, producing a high-quality military, but in the past few years all the military branches have struggled to make their enlistment quotas. Anderson also insinuated that drafted men wouldn't or didn't perform as well as an all-volunteer military. That is ridiculous and insulting. The draft produced many a Medal of Honor winner for our country in time of need.

Anderson also says it would be unlikely we would ever become involved in a confrontation that would last more than six months, the time it would take to have the first draftee inducted. But what if we did? At \$25 million, the Selective Service System is the federal government's least expensive program and a cheap insurance policy for our nation's defense.

I don't feel we need to reinstate the draft now, but I'm glad we have the tools in place to do it and for it to be done fairly if needed.

—Sam Snyder, Yoe, Pa.



A tough task

Thank you for the article “Thirteen Months as a POW” (September). My neighbor brought your magazine to me when he saw the picture that included Capt. John P. Ahlers. I was married to John. We both served during World War II. I was an Army nurse from New Jersey, John was a B-26 pilot from Illinois. We met, fell in love and married when we returned home.

Shortly before the birth of our second daughter, John received orders sending him to Korea. The night before he left, we sat down and talked about what I should do in the event of his death. I clearly remember that he said if he were shot down, he hoped it would be over water and that his body would never be recovered. He hated funerals.

When Capt. Robert Henry and Robert Festa were taken prisoner, they made a pact: whoever was repatriated first at the conclusion of the conflict would come and tell me that my husband had died. It fell to Capt. Henry to make that visit. He said the North Koreans who captured them said John's parachute never opened and that he died on impact. They showed them John's dog tags and wrist radio. Naturally, I was devastated. All those 13 months I hoped John was a POW.

For Capt. Henry, his arm in a sling, it was a difficult task to tell me John was dead. To this day I appreciate what he did. Several months later I drove to Connecticut to see Robert Festa, but he wasn't home. I am so thankful both these men made it back.

—Florence Louise Ahlers Bost, Centralia, Ill.

Correction: In a photo caption accompanying the article “The Wages of War” (September), the name of Medal of Honor recipient Staff Sgt. James R. Hendrix was misspelled. We regret the error.

Veterans: Rally America!



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*"As
veterans,
though, we
must do
more than
wait. We
can be the
connection
that brings
the nation
together."*



Americans have a new day of infamy, and the date is Sept. 11, 2001. On that date, terrorists hijacked four commercial jets and rammed them into the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., and the Pennsylvania countryside. Thousands of people were killed or injured in the attacks, which will go down in our nation's history as the single most devastating assault ever carried out on American civilians.

Let there be no mistake – the victims died in an act of war. One of our members will recall that they were placed in the shadows of war in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor. As happened then, an enemy who despises democracy has challenged America on her soil. And as then, our president has promised that those guilty of the destruction will be identified, apprehended and brought to justice.

In the meantime, still in searing pain over the lives lost in this greatest of American tragedies, we wait for justice to be done. As veterans, though, we must do more than wait. We can be the connection that brings the nation together.

War Comes Home. A crisis such as this is new to most Americans. Sure, we plunked down cash for "Saving Private Ryan." We watched the Gulf War on CNN. But the tremendous loss of life within our own borders and the nauseating reality that some forces would prefer our country and way of life be terminated has impacted the nation in a way never before experienced.

Let us face it – when those planes penetrated the towers of the World Trade Center, they

pierced the collective soul of Americans, regardless of their political party or religious persuasion. "War" was no longer a term used to describe past conflicts or disputes amongst other countries all around the world. The violence is now here in the United States, a nation we thought to be outside the bloodshed and carnage that engulfs other lands. The incidents of Sept. 11 are proof that we in America are no longer immune to such attacks and that we must take all necessary steps to prevent future assaults.

Veterans know terrorism firsthand because they fought on the battlefields of the world, and that is the terror of all terrorism. The hell of war came home in terrifying, unforgiving ways. So who better than veterans – men and women who have seen the worst of human nature, from the battlefields of Europe and Vietnam to the desert of Saudi Arabia – to comfort and counsel a generation of young Americans who never thought they'd see New York, Washington or any other American city under siege?

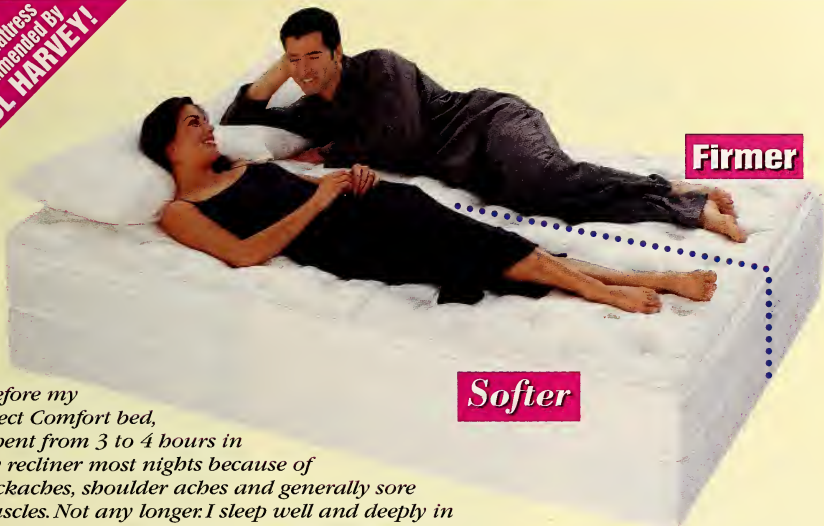
It is not naive to assume our children and grandchildren will ask "Why?" Our duty is to gently remind them that freedom is not free. It has and never will mean that lives – even the lives of innocent civilians, in the fragile security of their office buildings – will not be lost. That is the cost of democracy. And on this occasion, we, as a nation, paid the heavy price with our dearest blood.

America continues to heal, and it is our responsibility as veterans to tend to the wounds. Some will panic about the future; we must reassure them. Some will weep over a lost family member or



Gulf War veteran Jeff Barber bows his head in Albuquerque, N.M., during a moment of prayer for the victims of September's terrorist attacks. AP

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friend; we must hold their hands. Some will be angry; we must temper their rage.

For decades, veterans have shown their country that they cannot break the bond amongst those who have served in the military. Our Legion history reflects our coming together for the causes of national defense, veterans' benefits and a flag-protection amendment. Now, let us remain together to support the families of the men and women of our armed forces who urgently and expeditiously went to, and still maintain, full alert in light of the terrorist attacks.

Reviving Patriotism. After the World Trade Center and Pentagon disasters, it did not take long to see the American people unite. Once debates about the economy, education, Social Security and the tax cut were laid aside, members of Congress joined in a chorus of "God Bless America" on the Capitol steps. The rest of the country followed by expressing a common desire to see those behind the attacks apprehended and punished.

It did my heart good to see patriotism, which has been in the shadows far too long here in America. Debates of the day have taken a backseat to love of country. Catching, again, a glimpse of patriotism makes me certain that our nation will weather this storm.

I am not alone in my desire to see a revival in American patriotism. The time is now to display the American flag at our homes, our businesses and our churches. We must take this opportunity to educate young people on the matters of freedom and its relationship to Old Glory.

At this crucial point in our country's history, we must stand behind President George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress. As they deal with threats to our security as citizens, it is our role as veterans to lead the way in supporting our nation's leadership.

No one believes in a strong America more than veterans do. We, as veterans, have another opportunity to help keep our country strong. Let us recommit to that challenge.

Lending a hand

Since World War II, America has not seen such a national outpouring of love and unity as occurred after terrorists attacked the United States on Sept. 11. American Legion departments and posts around the world have responded by organizing volunteer efforts and inspiring local acts of patriotism. Now, with tens of thousands of U.S. troops alerted for duty – including a large percentage of Reserves and National Guardsmen with families and careers they must put on hold to fight the war on terrorism – Legionnaires are doing even more on the home front. Here are some programs, approaches and ideas for members who may be seeking answers to the question: "What more can I do?"

■ Family Support Network. This revitalized program, which helped more than 30,000 families during the Gulf War, provides assistance to the loved ones of military men and women mobilized to defend our nation in time of crisis. Simple acts of kindness, like baby-sitting, shopping, home maintenance, repairs and other needs are met by Legionnaires through FSN. Departments and posts are encouraged to appoint an FSN "point person" to personally spread awareness of the program – especially at bases, forts, armories and reserve centers – and to connect willing veterans with families in need. The Family Support Network hotline is (800) 504-4098.

■ Temporary Financial Assistance. This program provides direct cash assistance to military families in order to meet the basic needs of children when no other resources are available. Funds can be used to make payments for pre-approved medical expenses, food, clothing, utilities and shelter. American Legion membership is not a requirement for financial assistance, but basic eligibility criteria must be met. Application information is available by calling (800) 504-4098.

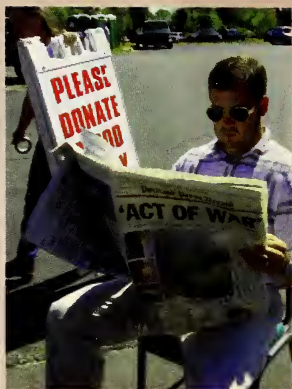
■ Army Outreach. Post commanders can make themselves available and offer member services at National Guard armories and reserve centers that may be short-staffed due to the sudden call to duty. The local military facility, for instance, may need clerical or janitorial help while troops are moving out. Post and department leaders are urged to make personal contact at those installations to see where the Legion can volunteer.

■ Lobbying Employers. Legionnaires are urged to contact business leaders in their communities to assure National Guard and Reserve members do not face financial hardship because they are serving their country. Many companies are willing to make up the difference between military pay and regular paycheck, but some need to be reminded of that patriotic duty.

■ Local Leadership. The American Legion post can serve as a clearing house for local efforts among all civic organizations and schools to support the troops and build on the current high level of patriotism.

■ Media Support. Local newspapers should be asked to publish the names of local troops in action.

■ Blood Donor Lists. If area blood banks are currently full, a local donor list of names of people willing to give blood can be assembled and managed by Legionnaires.



Air Force Capt. Matthew Demers reads about the terrorist attacks while waiting to give blood in Portland, Maine. AP

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'A Wake-Up Call From HELL'



Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shares in America's grief and defiance but warns not to side with one evil to defeat another.

Editor's note - The following is a direct statement delivered by former Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu before the U.S. House of Representatives' Government Reform Committee on Sept. 20.

CHAIRMAN BURTON, distinguished representatives: I want to thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I feel a profound responsibility addressing you in this hour of peril in the capital of liberty.

What is at stake today is nothing less than the survival of our civilization. There may be some who would have thought a week ago that to talk in these apocalyptic terms about the battle against international terrorism was to engage in reckless exaggeration. No longer.

Each one of us today understands that we are all targets, that our cities are vulnerable, and that our values are hated with an unmatched fanaticism that seeks to

destroy our societies and our way of life. I am certain that I speak on behalf of my entire nation when I say: Today, we are all Americans – in grief, as in defiance.

In grief, because my people have faced the agonizing horrors of terror for many decades, and we feel an instant kinship with both the victims of this tragedy and the great nation that mourns its fallen brothers and sisters.

In defiance, because just as my country continues to fight terrorism in our battle for survival, I know that America will not cower before this challenge.

I have absolute confidence that if we, the citizens of the free world, led by President Bush, marshal the enormous reserves of power at our disposal, harness the steely resolve of a free people, and mobilize our collective will, we shall eradicate this evil from the face of the earth.

But to achieve this goal, we must first, however, answer several questions: Who is responsible for this terrorist onslaught? Why? What is the motive behind these attacks? And most importantly, what must be done to defeat these evil forces?

The first and most crucial thing to understand is this: There is no international terrorism without the support of sovereign states. International terrorism simply cannot be sustained for long without the regimes that aid and abet it.

Terrorists are not suspended in mid-air. They train, arm and indoctrinate their killers from within safe havens on territory provided by terrorist states. Often these regimes provide the terrorists with intelligence, money and operational assistance, dispatching them to serve as deadly proxies to wage a hidden

war against more powerful enemies.

These regimes mount a worldwide propaganda campaign to legitimize terror, besmirching its victims and exculpating its practitioners – as we witnessed in the farcical spectacle in Durban last month.

Iran, Libya and Syria call the United States and Israel racist countries that abuse human rights? Even Orwell could not have imagined such a world.

Take away all this state support, and the entire scaffolding of international terrorism will col-



lapse into the dust.

The international terrorist network is thus based on regimes – Iran, Iraq, Syria, Taliban Afghanistan, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority and several other Arab regimes such as the Sudan. These regimes are the ones that harbor the terrorist groups: Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, Hizballah and others in Syrian-controlled Lebanon, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the recently mobilized Fatah and Tanzim factions in the Palestinian territories, and sundry other terror organizations based in such capitals as Damascus, Baghdad and Khartoum. These terrorist states and terror organizations together form a terror network, whose constituent parts support each other operationally as well as politically.

For example, the Palestinian groups cooperate closely with Hezbollah, which in turn links them to Syria, Iran and bin Laden. These offshoots of terror have affiliates in other states that have not yet uprooted their presence, such as Egypt, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Now, how did this come about? The growth of this terror network

is the result of several developments in the last two decades: Chief among them is the Khomeini Revolution and the establishment of a clerical Islamic state in Iran. This created a sovereign spiritual base for fomenting a strident Islamic militancy worldwide – a militancy that was often backed by terror. Equally important was the victory in the Afghan war of the international mujahedeen brotherhood.

This international band of zealots, whose ranks include Osama bin Laden, saw their victory over the Soviet Union as providential proof of the innate supremacy of faithful Moslems over the weak infidel powers. They believed that even the superior weapons of a superpower could not withstand their superior will.

To this should also be added Saddam Hussein's escape from destruction at the end of the Gulf War, his dismissal of U.N. monitors and his growing confidence that he can soon develop unconventional weapons to match those of the west.

Finally, the creation of Yasser Arafat's terror enclave gave a safe

haven to militant Islamic terrorist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Like their mujahedeen cousins, they drew inspiration from Israel's hasty withdrawal from Lebanon, glorified as a great Moslem victory by the Syrian-backed Hizballah. Under Arafat's rule, these Palestinian Islamic terrorist groups made repeated use of the technique of suicide bombing, going so far as to run summer camps in Gaza that teach Palestinian children how to become suicide martyrs.

Here is what Arafat's government-controlled newspaper, *Al Hayat Al Jadida*, said on Sept. 11, the very day of the suicide bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon: "The suicide bombers of today are the noble successors of the Lebanese suicide bombers, who taught the U.S. Marines a tough lesson in (Lebanon) ... These suicide bombers are the salt of the earth, the engines of history ... They are the most honorable people among us ..."

A simple rule prevails here: The success of terrorists in one part of the terror network emboldens terrorists throughout the network. This then is the who.

Now for the why: Though its separate parts may have local objectives and take part in local conflicts, the main motivation driving the terror network is an anti-western hostility that seeks to achieve nothing less than a reversal of history. It seeks to roll back the west and install an extremist form of Islam as the dominant power in the world.

It seeks to do this not by means of its own advancement and progress, but by destroying the enemy. This hatred is the product of a seething resentment that has simmered for centuries in certain parts of the Arab and Islamic world.

Most Moslems in the world, including the vast majority of the growing Moslem communities in the west, are not guided by this

Iranian students cheer during a 1999 speech by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the hostage-taking from the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Regimes such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Taliban Afghanistan and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority are critical links in the international terror network. AFP/Corbis



"We must dismantle the entire terrorist network. If any part of it remains intact, it will rebuild itself, and the specter of terrorism will re-emerge and strike again."

interpretation of history, nor are they moved by its call for a holy war against the west.

But some are. And though their numbers are small compared to the peaceable majority, they nevertheless constitute a growing hinterland for this militancy.

Militant Islamists resented the west for pushing back the triumphant march of Islam into the heart of Europe many centuries ago. Its adherents, believing in the innate supremacy of Islam, then suffered a series of shocks when in the last two centuries that same hated, supposedly inferior west penetrated Islamic realms in North Africa, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. For them the mission was clear: The west had to be first pushed out of these areas. Pro-western middle eastern regimes were toppled in rapid succession, including in Iran.

And Israel, the Middle East's only democracy and its purest manifestation of western progress and freedom, must be wiped off the face of the earth. Thus, the soldiers of militant Islam do not hate the west because of Israel; they hate Israel because of the west – because they see it is an island of western democratic values in a Moslem-Arab sea of despotism. That is why they call Israel the "Little Satan," to distinguish it clearly from the country that has always been and will always be the "Great Satan" – the United States of America.

Nothing better illustrates this than Osama bin Laden's call for Jihad against the United States in 1998. He gave as his primary reason not Israel, not the Palestinians, not the peace process, but rather the very presence of the United States "occupying the land of Islam in the holiest of places."

And where is that?

"The Arabian peninsula," says bin Laden, where America is "plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers and humiliating its people."

Israel, by the way, comes a distant third, after "the continuing aggression against the Iraqi people." (*Al Quds al Arabi* – Feb.

23, 1998). For the bin Ladens of the world Israel is merely a sideshow. America is the target.

But re-establishing a resurgent Islam requires not just rolling back the west; it requires destroying its main engine, the United States. And if the United States cannot be destroyed just now, it can be first humiliated – as in the Tehran hostage crisis two decades ago – and then ferociously attacked again and again, until it is brought to its knees.

But the ultimate goal remains the same: Destroy America and win eternity.

Some of you may find it hard to believe that Islamic militants truly cling to the mad fantasy of destroying America. Make no mistake about it. They do. And unless they are stopped now, their attacks will continue and become even more lethal in the future.

To understand the true dangers of Islamic militancy, we can compare it to another ideology which sought world domination – communism. Both movements pursued irrational goals, but the communists at least pursued theirs in a rational way.

Anytime they had to choose between ideology and their own survival, as in Cuba or Berlin, they backed off and chose survival.

Not so for the Islamic militants. They pursue an irrational ideology irrationally – with no apparent regard for human life, neither their own lives nor the lives of their enemies. The communists seldom, if ever, produced suicide bombers, while Islamic militancy produces hordes of them, glorifying them and promising them that their dastardly deeds will earn them a glorious afterlife. This highly pathological aspect of Islamic militancy is what makes it so deadly for mankind.

When in 1996 I wrote a book about fighting terrorism, I warned about the militant Islamic groups operating in the west with the support of foreign powers – serv-

ing as a new breed of "domestic-international" terrorists, basing themselves in America to wage jihad against America.

Such groups, I wrote then, nullify in large measure the need to have air power or intercontinental missiles as delivery systems for an Islamic nuclear payload. They will be the delivery system. In the worst of such scenarios, I wrote, the consequences could be not a car bomb but a nuclear bomb in the basement of the World Trade Center.

Well, they did not use a nuclear bomb. They used two 150-ton fully fueled jetliners to wipe out the Twin Towers. But does anyone doubt that given the chance they will throw atom bombs at America and its allies? And perhaps long before that chemical and biological weapons?

This is the greatest danger facing our common future. Some states of the terror network already possess chemical and biological capabilities, and some are feverishly developing nuclear weapons. Can one rule out the possibility that they will be tempted to use such weapons, openly or through terror proxies, or that their weapons might fall into the hands of the terrorist groups they harbor?

We have received a wake-up call from hell. Now the question is simple: Do we rally to defeat this evil, while there is still time, or do we press a collective snooze button and go back to business as usual?

The time for action is now.

Today the terrorists have the will to destroy us, but they do not have the power. There is no doubt that we have the power to crush them. Now we must also show that we have the will to do just that.

Once any part of the terror network acquires nuclear weapons, this equation will fundamentally change, and with it the course of human affairs. This is the historical imperative that now confronts all of us.

And now the third point: What do we do about it?

First, as President Bush said, we must make no distinction be-



tween the terrorists and the states that support them. It is not enough to root out the terrorists who committed this horrific act of war. We must dismantle the entire terrorist network. If any part of it remains intact, it will rebuild itself, and the specter of terrorism will re-emerge and strike again. Bin Laden, for example, has shuttled over the last decade from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan to the Sudan and back again. So we must not leave any base intact.

To achieve this goal we must first have moral clarity. We must fight terror wherever and whenever it appears. We must make all states play by the same rules. We must declare terrorism a crime against humanity, and we must consider the terrorists enemies of mankind, to be given no quarter and no consideration for their purported grievances.

If we begin to distinguish between acts of terror, justifying some and repudiating others based on sympathy with this or that cause, we will lose the moral clarity that is so essential for victory.

This clarity is what enabled America and Britain to root out piracy in the 19th century. This is how the Allies rooted out Nazism in the 20th century.

They did not look for the "root cause" of piracy or the "root cause" of Nazism – because they

knew that some acts are evil in and of themselves, and do not deserve any consideration or "understanding." They did not ask if Hitler was right about the alleged wrong done to Germany at Versailles. That they left to the historians. The leaders of the Western Alliance said something else: Nothing justifies Nazism. Nothing!

We must be equally clear cut today: Nothing justifies terrorism. Nothing!

Terrorism is defined not by the identity of its perpetrators nor by the cause they espouse. Rather, it is defined by the nature of the act.

Terrorism is the deliberate attack on innocent civilians. In this it must be distinguished from legitimate acts of war that target combatants and may unintentionally harm civilians. When the British bombed a Gestapo headquarters in 1944, and one of their bombs unintentionally struck a children's hospital that was a tragedy, but it was not terrorism. When Israel fired a missile that killed two Hamas arch-terrorists, and two Palestinian children who were playing nearby were tragically struck down, that is not terrorism.

But terrorists do not unintentionally harm civilians. They deliberately murder, maim and menace civilians – as many as possible.

No cause, no grievance, no apology can ever justify terrorism. Ter-

Two fully fueled jetliners made effective bombs when they hit the towers of the World Trade Center in September. Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons may be next if terrorists and the regimes that support them are not denied the technological power to wage even greater destruction. US Navy

rorism against Americans, Israelis, Spaniards, Britons, Russians or anyone else, is all part of the same evil and must be treated as such.

It is time to establish a fixed principle for the international community: any cause that uses terrorism to advance its aims will not be rewarded. On the contrary, it will be punished and placed beyond the pale.

Armed with this moral clarity in defining terrorism, we must possess an equal moral clarity in fighting it.

If we include Iran, Syria and the Palestinian Authority in the coalition to fight terror – even though they currently harbor, sponsor and dispatch terrorists – then the alliance against terror will be defeated from within.

Perhaps we might achieve a short-term objective of destroying one terrorist field, but it will preclude the possibility of overall victory. Such a coalition will melt down because of its own internal contradictions.

We might win a battle. We will certainly lose the war. These regimes, like all terrorist states, must be given a forthright demand: Stop terrorism, permanently, or you will face the wrath of the free world – through harsh and sustained political, economic and military sanctions.

Obviously, some of these regimes will scramble in fear and issue platitudes about their opposition to terror, just as Arafat, Iran and Syria did, while they keep their terror apparatus intact. We should not be fooled. These regimes are already on the U.S. lists of states supporting terrorism – and if they're not, they should be.

The price of admission for any state into the coalition against terror must be to first completely dismantle the terrorist infrastructure within their realm.

Iran will have to dismantle a worldwide network of terrorism and incitement based in Tehran. Syria

will have to shut down Hizballah and the dozen terrorist organizations that operate freely in Damascus and in Lebanon. Arafat will have to crush Hamas and Islamic Jihad, close down their suicide factories and training grounds, rein in his own Fatah and Tanzim terrorists and cease the endless incitement to violence.

To win this war, we must fight on many fronts. The most obvious one is direct military action against the terrorists themselves. Israel's policy of preemptively striking at those who seek to murder its people is, I believe, better understood today and requires no further elaboration.

But there is no substitute for the key action that we must take: Imposing the most punishing diplomatic, economic and military sanction on all terrorist states.

To this must be added these measures:

- Freeze financial assets in the west of terrorist regimes and organizations.
- Revise legislation, subject to periodic renewal, to enable better surveillance against organizations inciting violence.
- Keep convicted terrorists behind bars. Do not negotiate with terrorists.
- Train special forces to fight terror.

And, not least important, impose sanctions on suppliers of nuclear technology to terrorist states.

I've had some experience in pursuing all these courses of action in Israel's battle against terrorism, and I will be glad to elaborate on any one of them if you wish, including the sensitive questions surrounding intelligence.

But I have to be clear: Victory over terrorism is not, at its most fundamental level, a matter of law enforcement or intelligence. However important these functions may be, they can only reduce the dangers, not eliminate them.

The immediate objective is to end all state support for, and com-

"To win this war, we must fight on many fronts. The most obvious one is direct military action against the terrorists themselves."



A masked Hamas supporter, dressed in a belt made to resemble explosives, clutches a hand grenade during a march in the streets of the Jebaliya refugee camp in Gaza City, Gaza Strip. AP

licity with, terror. If vigorously and continuously challenged, most of these regimes can be deterred from sponsoring terrorism.

But there is a real possibility that some will not be deterred – and those may be ones that possess weapons of mass destruction.

Again, we cannot dismiss the possibility that a militant terrorist state will use its proxies to threaten or launch a nuclear attack with apparent impunity. Nor can we completely dismiss the possibility that a militant regime, like its terrorist proxies, will commit collective suicide for the sake of its fanatical ideology.

In this case, we might face not thousands of dead, but hundreds of thousands and possibly millions. This is why the United States must do everything in its power to prevent regimes like Iran and Iraq from developing nuclear weapons,

and disarm them of their weapons of mass destruction.

This is the great mission that now stands before the free world. That mission must not be watered down to allow certain states to participate in the coalition that is now being organized. Rather, the coalition must be built around this mission.

It may be that some will shy away from adopting such an uncompromising stance against terrorism. If some free states choose to remain on the sidelines, America must be prepared to march forward without them – for there is no substitute for moral and strategic clarity.

I believe that if the United States stands on principle, all the democracies will eventually join the war on terrorism. The easy route may be tempting, but it will not win the day.

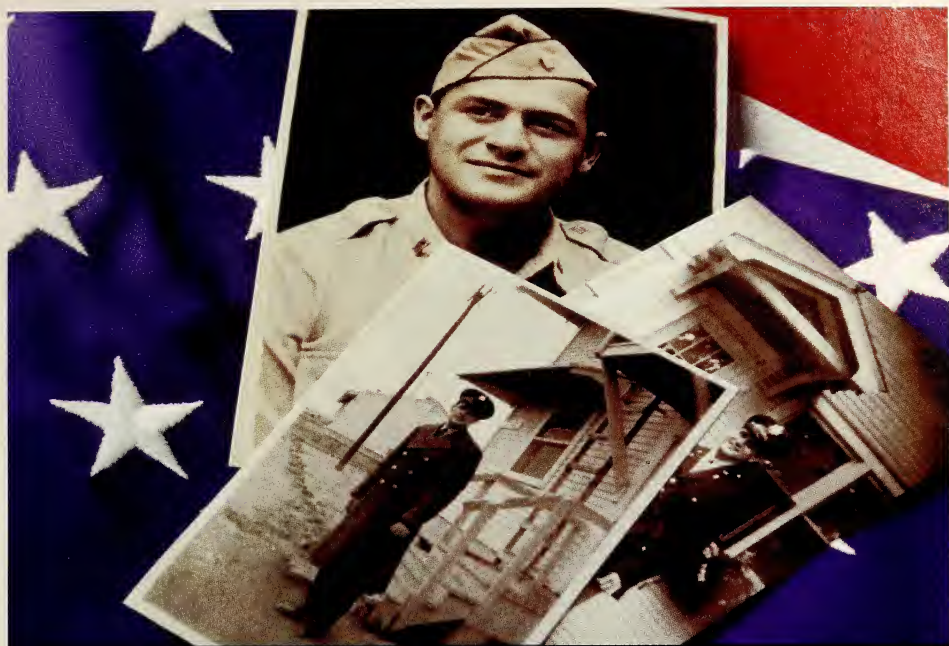
On Sept. 11, I, like everyone else, was glued to a television set watching the savagery that struck America. Yet amid the smoking ruins of the

Twin Towers one could make out the Statue of Liberty holding high the torch of freedom. It is freedom's flame that the terrorists sought to extinguish. But it is that same torch, so proudly held by the United States, that can lead the free world to crush the forces of terror and secure our tomorrow.

It is within our power. Let us now make sure that it is within our will. □

Born in Tel-Aviv in 1949, Benjamin Netanyahu is the grandson of a Lithuanian rabbi who emigrated to Palestine in 1920. He received all of his higher education in the United States and has both American and Israeli citizenship. A former ambassador to the United Nations, he served as Israeli prime minister from 1996 to 1999.

Article design: Doug Rollison



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Veterans

The only enduring symbol of peace

Veterans Day was so-named because peace, unfortunately, doesn't last forever. History never stops proving that point.

For the United States in the past quarter-century, war has drifted in and out of a restless, distant slumber. It has bolted awake in places like Lebanon, Bosnia, Somalia, Panama or Kuwait – locations hard enough for most Americans to find on a map, let alone understand the often-complicated reasons why our troops were asked to fight there. On our own continent, war had slept for nearly 140 years until everything changed Sept. 11. And as we all know, it did not just reawaken in America. It erupted, in broad daylight, before our disbelieving eyes.

Fiery explosions. The dust and rubble of crumbled buildings. Americans in suits and ties or dresses and heels – some in military fatigues – running for their lives, jumping out of windows, as a billowing, smoky cloud of horror closed in on them. Then came the unmistakable scent of death. Impressions like these are not easily absorbed by ordinary Americans, most of whom possess, at best, a Hollywood understanding of war.

War veterans are different that way. Experienced in chaos, they often know from fighting in distant lands where terror has ruled that America has been lucky for a good, long time. Veterans also know the price of peace, the lives it invariably costs, and the difficulty of recapturing its blessings should it escape. And it always does.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, the guns of World War I were finally silenced, and Nov. 11 was established as Armistice Day. It was America's time to celebrate the renewal of world peace, the end of what was to be the war to



Corbis/StockMarket

end all wars. "With the World War was born the hope for permanent peace," American Legion National Commander Edward Spafford said in 1927. "It was a faint and uncertain hope, and that is all it is today. History and facts show it to be nothing more." Spafford sounded cynical for the time, but world events to follow, of course, proved him right.

Indeed, the next generation of veterans marched in and out of various hells around the planet – Bastogne, Iwo Jima, Tarawa, Anzio, the Chosin Reservoir, Pork Chop Hill – and it was obvious by the middle of the century that the World War I armistice was just one in a series.

In 1954, the holiday was rightfully revised and renamed to stand as an annual moment of tribute to all war veterans, alive

or dead – past, present and future – and for all the armistices they forged. The American veteran became the symbol of world peace.

In a prepared Veterans Day speech in 1955, Legionnaires across America reminded their communities that "... no segment of our people could be more determined advocates of peace than our veterans, who have actually felt the sufferings of war. The chief difference, perhaps, between veterans and non-veterans lies in the degree of realism with which they approach the whole subject of war and the prevention of war."

Gen. Douglas MacArthur put it this way in a speech at the U.S. Military Academy in 1962: "The soldier, above all, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war."

Veterans also know that power and the ability to execute it is the surest route to a peaceful end. In 1966, J. William Fulbright explained it this way to his fellow U.S. sen-

ators: "In a contest between a hawk and a dove, the hawk has the great advantage, not because it is a better bird, but because it is a bigger bird with lethal talons and a highly developed will to use them."

As workers continue to pick through the rubble in New York City this Nov. 11, American war veterans, non-veterans, Reserves, Guardsmen and active-duty personnel alike find themselves standing together, sharing a "highly developed will" of patriotism, faith, courage and resolve – values veterans have always drawn upon in times of crisis, when the price of peace might just be paid in human lives.

They are the values America will honor, perhaps more acutely than ever, on this particularly significant Veterans Day.

– Jeff Stoffer

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Keeping his word

Smith's promise to halt membership slide realized at 83rd National Convention.

BY STEVE BROOKS

When he was sworn in as national commander during the 2000 American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee, Ray G. Smith made a promise to Legionnaires.

At this year's national convention in San Antonio, Smith proved he's a man who keeps his word.

Approximately 12,000 Legionnaires, their families and guests traveled to San Antonio Aug. 25-30 for the 83rd National Convention. There they got the message from Smith that the future is bright for America's largest veterans organization.

"A year ago, I pledged as national commander to stop the membership slide," Smith told Legionnaires at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. "I felt tackling this challenge would be the focus during my year in office because, as you know, membership is the lifeblood of any organization. I am delighted to report that our membership slide has stopped. Not only that, it has been reversed. Thanks to you, we are growing again."

Smith said membership stands at 2,701,002, four departments reached all-time membership highs, and 19 departments achieved their 100-percent goals, a five-year high. Additionally, 2002 membership as of Aug. 25 stood at 1,153,070, up 104,000 from one year ago.

"This didn't happen because we changed our values," Smith said. "It happened because you asked new veterans to join our



National Commander Ray G. Smith promised to halt the membership slide. At the 83rd National Convention, he told delegates he followed through on that promise. Tom Stratman

ranks. We now have a stronger foundation to continue this membership growth going into the 2002 membership year and beyond."

Smith's success story was one of many highlights at the convention, which included speeches from President George W. Bush,

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Henry H. Shelton, five members of Congress and two Cabinet members.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw spoke to Legionnaires via videotaped presentations. Brokaw, whose book "The

"I am delighted to report that our membership slide has stopped. Not only that, it has been reversed. Thanks to you, we are growing again."

— 2000-2001 National Commander Ray Smith

Greatest Generation" salutes those who fought in World War II and then returned home to rebuild America, was presented the Legion's Education Award.



President George W. Bush greets the crowd on the convention floor. Tom Stratmann

Hail to the Chief. President Bush received a boisterous welcome from Legion delegates and guests. He immediately praised the organization for sticking by the principles of its founders despite an ever-changing world.

"You've seen wars and the aftermath. You received millions into your ranks. You've seen our culture change for better, and sometimes for worse," Bush said. "Yet from that founding day in 1919, to this very day, The American Legion has never compromised its principles. As Gen. Douglas MacArthur said at your 1951 convention, The American Legion has been invincibly faithful to God and to country."

At the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, Bush campaigned to Legionnaires on promises of increased spending for both veterans affairs and national defense. In San Antonio, he said those promises stand.

"Those commitments are now becoming policies, and the needs of our veterans are once again priorities of our government," Bush said. "If you've worn the uniform, you know just how efficiently government can sometimes work. When government needed your services, it moved pretty fast; there weren't

many delays. And that is exactly how government ought to operate (in administering) the benefits you earned.

"Some of you are among the thousands of veterans whose claims have been delayed, or sadly enough, lost in the bureaucracy. In my direction to the Department of Veterans Affairs, it has begun to change the way it does business. And I put a good man in charge, my friend and your friend, Tony Principi. Under Secretary Principi, claims are being given the highest priority. They will be brought to a fair resolution without excuses and without delay."

Bush said VA has a backlog of more than 600,000 pending bene-

fits applications, and 53,000 have been pending for more than a year. Many of those were filed by veterans 70 and older.

"Think about that. Here are thousands of men who served their country in Korea and World War II, or both," Bush said.

"The last thing they need to hear from any federal office is more routine excuses. That's wrong. And this administration is going to get it right."

To meet that goal, Bush said he's created a task force to recommend major reforms in the delivery of health care to veterans and military retirees. National Adjutant Robert Spanogle has agreed to serve on that task force representing the Legion.

Bush pledged higher spending on the military, another one of his campaign promises, and continued support for the flag-protection amendment.

"We must, and we will, make major investments in (military)



National Commander Ray G. Smith, right, presents 2000-2001 Department of Arizona Commander Mary Piotrowski with a plaque during the convention. Arizona set an all-time high in membership and also met the 100-percent membership mark. James V. Carroll

Membership numbers result in awards

In a banner year for American Legion membership, National Commander Ray G. Smith spent part of the 83rd National Convention thanking many people and departments for their hard work.

Four departments hit all-time highs in membership numbers: Nevada, Delaware, Arizona and Florida. And a total of 19 departments hit 100-percent membership marks. They were Nevada, Delaware, Arizona, Florida, France, South Carolina, Utah, Colorado, Georgia, Alaba-

ma, Idaho, Hawaii, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Wyoming, Vermont, New Hampshire and Montana.

The Department of France had the highest percentage of membership gain from Feb. 1 to May 1, while Delaware came in second. Vermont was a close third.

Howard Van Dyke of the Department of Virginia was honored as the Legion's National Recruiter of the Year. Van Dyke brought 414 new members into the organization this year.

research and development," he said. "We are committed to defending America and our allies against ballistic missile attacks, against weapons of mass destruction held by rogue leaders and rogue nations that hate America, hate our values and hate what we stand for. It's a dangerous world."

Bush also delivered a message of hope for the economy. "Our economy began slowing down last year, and that is bad news. I'm deeply worried about the working families all across the country," he said. "But with the tax reduction already in place, Americans will have more of their own money to spend, to save and invest, the very things that make our economy grow. Tax relief is exactly the right kind of thing, the right prescription at the right time for the American economy."

Prior to Bush's speech, First Lady Laura Bush was honored as The American Legion Auxiliary's Woman of the Year.

Principi Addresses Legionnaires.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi, a lifetime member of Blair American Legion Post 17 in Kodiak, Alaska, echoed Bush's plan to improve VA's service to America's veterans, listing a five-point program that includes:

- Making VA the nation's recognized leader in efficient, high-quality health care for U.S. veterans.
- Making VA the nation's recognized leader in disability compensation and evaluation.
- Making VA the recognized leader in research.
- Showing America's troops they will forever be remembered in national cemeteries that are recognized as national shrines.
- Making VA a recognized leader in the application of sound business principles.

Principi agreed that addressing the department's current backlog needs to be the top priority in



Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi

Robinson is Legion's "Good Guy"

David Robinson has accomplished almost everything a professional basketball player can accomplish. As a member of the San Antonio Spurs, he was the MVP of the National Basketball Association, won an NBA title and was named Rookie of the Year in 1990.

But Robinson's impact off the court is just as impressive. As a result, he was selected as the Legion's James V. Day Good Guy Award recipient at the Past Department Commanders Club Luncheon Aug. 27 in San Antonio.

"Standing in this room, it's a little bit overwhelming," Robinson told the packed luncheon.

"All of you have a lot more experience and probably have done a lot more for this country in your communities than I have. But hopefully I'm well on my way."

Robinson's off-the-court accomplishments include creating the David Robinson Foundation with his wife, Valerie. The foundation is a Christian organization that aims to support programs that address the physical and spiritual needs of families.

He also donated \$5 million to



David Robinson was presented the Legion's James V. Day Good Guy Award during the Past Department Commanders Club Luncheon in San Antonio. James V. Carroll

establish the Carver Academy at San Antonio's Carver Cultural Center. The academy is a pre-kindergarten to eighth-grade independent school. Its primary purpose is to provide an intensive academic environment for student enrollees, while molding

reaching these goals. "We need to address this crisis with a sense of urgency, the same sense of urgency we had during World War II," he said. "If we could do it then, we can certainly take care of it now. Veterans, not the VA, are the victims of these delays. I want to go back to a time when claim decisions are made in 90 days and done right the first time."

Praise for Military Support.

Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was presented the Legion's Distinguished Service Award. Smith cited Shelton's support of the Reconnect program, which unites organization members with active-duty personnel at installations throughout the country. Shelton in turn praised Legionnaires for the work they do supporting the military.

"I salute you for the important work the Legion continues to do,"

said Shelton, who planned to retire from service Sept. 30. "In my opinion, The American Legion today is still on the front lines serving the country. The only difference is you don't have to eat C-rations, K-rations or MREs."

Shelton told Legionnaires that America's armed forces face the challenge of both complacency and change. Despite being the world's only superpower, Shelton said the United States must begin to increase its military spending while not falling into the trap of complacency.

"It's certainly an unpredictable world we live in today," he said.



Gen. Henry H. Shelton

creative future leaders. The core curriculum of the Carver Academy will promote academic proficiency in reading, mathematics, science, languages and technology. It opened this fall.

"I've always felt that academics were important," said Robinson, who graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1987. "But more important than that is for the kids to feel like they're a part of something greater, that they have a vision above going out and just being successful and making money."

"That's what I want to teach these kids here in San Antonio. I want to teach them how to live their lives. I want to teach them why to do things that are right, why you should stay with your wife, why you should pay your taxes, why you should not sell drugs."

"I think David epitomizes the spirit of the award, not only as a legendary figure in the National Basketball Association, but also in believing in and caring for others," said PDCC President Robert D. Scott.

"The truth is, we've never predicted the use of force (against the United States) in any of America's major wars."

U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, thanked the Legion for going to bat for overseas military personnel whose votes were almost tossed out of last year's presidential election and vowed to see that such a thing never happens again.

"We need to guarantee by law that when people put on the uniform of this country, when they're abroad serving this country, they have a right to vote and they have a right to see those votes counted," he said. "I want us to form together this year to guarantee that never again is the right of military personnel to vote ever challenged when they have followed what they believe to be the rules and procedures in effect."

Supporting Old Glory. Several speakers, in addition to the president, voiced their support for the



**Maj. Gen.
Patrick H. Brady**

flag-protection amendment, SJ Res 7, including retired Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady, chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance and a longtime spokesman in the fight to combat flag desecration as a form of "free speech."

"Once again, you are engaged in a great battle for America," said Brady, a Medal of Honor recipient. "Once again you are standing for what is right. Today you do not stand against tanks and rockets and missiles. Your wounds certainly will not be mortal."

"But the wounds to America could be, if your special kind of patriotism ever dies. It's my great honor to stand with you in this effort."

The House of Representatives' version of the flag-protection amendment, HJ Res. 36, overwhelmingly passed July 17 and has been sent to the Senate and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

"Never forget that the foundation of all we are doing for the flag is the Constitution," Brady said. "The Constitution is the only guarantee of our future. Flag burners are not the problem. The problem are those who distort the Constitution by calling flag burning 'speech.'"



Merlin Olsen, spokesman for the Children's Miracle Network, presents a beneficiary of the CMN's work, Shelly Urdiales. James V. Carroll

Thankful for CMN Support. Merlin Olsen, spokesman for the Children's Miracle Network and a member of the Pro Football Hall

of Fame, thanked the Legion for its support of children's hospitals across the country.

"Each year, 14 million (children) are helped by the Children's Miracle Network hospitals," Olsen said. "Your support has been astounding."

The Legion has raised approximately \$1.8 million for the CMN this year and \$3.6 million in three years.

"No success feels better or means more than that of helping a child," he said. "There is nothing more heartbreaking or uplifting than a child who valiantly battles through an injury or a birth defect. These children and their families are real-life champions."

Honoring Fallen Comrades. Three past national commanders who passed away this year – E. Roy Stone Jr., William R. Burke

Legionnaires thanked for memorial support

Retired Army Maj. Gen. John P. Herrling briefed Legionnaires attending the 83rd National Convention on the status of the National World War II Memorial. The audience loved what he had to say.

"My message is a simple one. Work on the World War II memorial has begun," Herrling said, as the convention floor roared in approval. "If you visit Washington, D.C., next month, you will see the World War II memorial under construction. There are no more 'whens' or 'maybes.' We are on the way."

Herrling said site mobilization began Aug. 27 and that construction process should last 30 months. A spring 2004 dedication is anticipated.

Herrling praised the Legion family, which donated \$4.5 million to the memorial.

"There's no better spokesman than your national commander, Ray Smith," Herrling said. "Thank you for being there when you were needed."



The Department of Tennessee delegates conducted their caucus in the hallowed Alamo. *James V. Carroll*

Tennessee caucus 'recaptures' Alamo

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Then try again. It worked for Department of Tennessee Adjutant Mike Hammer.

His perseverance led to the Tennessee delegation conducting its caucus on the hallowed grounds of the Alamo.

The story of the Alamo has been told in movies and served as a rallying cry for U.S. forces for more than a century. American settlers in Texas were attempting to form their own republic against the wishes of the Mexican government. Armies were massed to stop the rebellion.

A small group of volunteer and professional soldiers, including former U.S. Rep. Davy Crockett, a Tennessean, occupied the Spanish mission "Alamo" in San Antonio as Mexican Gen. Santa Anna's forces marched through the territory.

For 13 days, the rebels held Mexican forces totaling more than 2,000 at bay, but on March 6, 1836, Santa Anna's troops stormed the mission and killed all 189 men inside, including 31 Tennesseans. Mexican casualties have been estimated at anywhere from 1,000 to 1,600.

It's no wonder Hammer wanted his caucus to meet there. But the special occasion didn't happen easily.

"At every national convention, I've tried to have our caucus at a unique location," Hammer said. "Last year in Milwaukee, for example, we had it on a riverboat. And

so in San Antonio, the only place I wanted to have it was the Alamo."

Hammer started out by e-mailing the Alamo staff with his request to hold the delegation's caucus there for approximately two hours. The staff denied the request.

Hammer then wrote a letter on American Legion letterhead to the staff, explaining the many roles the Legion fills in working for veterans, their families and America's youth, among other duties, along with another request. He again was told no.

That's when Hammer, a retired U.S. Army officer, pulled out his trump card.

"I sent them another letter, this one with my military insignia and branch of service on it," he said. "I also explained that the Alamo owed a great deal of debt to Tennessee, that Davy Crockett and his volunteers came from Tennessee, that Sam Houston, who was the governor of Tennessee and later the governor of Texas, was from Tennessee and defeated Gen. Santa Anna a few weeks after the Alamo.

"I basically suggested that if it weren't for Tennessee, there wouldn't be a Texas. They wrote back and said, 'Dear sir, you can have your caucus here.'"

Forty-two delegates, along with 30 guests and alternates, attended the caucus in the Alamo Hall. "We're going to recapture the Alamo," said Tennessee delegate Carl Levi as his entourage entered the mission.

and James M. Wagoner — were honored during a Post Everlasting tribute.

Burke, national commander from 1960 to 1961, passed away May 6; Wagoner, who led the Legion from 1974 to 1975, was called to Post Everlasting May 26.

Stone, who passed away April 29, was named past national commander at the 1987 convention. Stone also was honored when the National Emergency Fund was presented with a check in his honor for \$13,866 from delegates of the southern caucus.

Reaching Out. Delegates chose Maryland Legionnaire Richard J. "Ric" Santos, a U.S. Navy Vietnam War veteran, as the new national commander on the convention's last day.

Santos, 57, a member of Greenbelt American Legion Post 136, has held numerous leadership positions at the post, state and national levels. He also has served on the Maryland Veterans Commission and the Maryland Military Monuments Commission.

Santos presented Legionnaires with his theme for 2001-2002, "Reaching Out in All Directions," which is based upon the four pillars of The American Legion: Americanism, Children and Youth, National Security, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

"You are being asked to reach out in order to increase membership and to improve the services provided to and the benefits earned by our nation's veterans," Santos said. "By reaching out, we can and will make a difference in the lives of our nation's veterans through the enhancement of American Legion membership and its service programs."

Santos said those goals can be achieved through implementing new membership enhancements and creative service programs conducive to sustaining membership growth. One such program will be



2001-2002
SAL National
Commander
Clifford Smith

"By reaching out, we can and will make a difference in the lives of our nation's veterans through the enhancement of American Legion membership and its service programs."

— 2001-2002 National Commander Ric Santos



National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos is sworn into the office by Past National Commander Clarence M. Bacon. *Tom Strattman*

the "Ric's Retrievers" group, based upon the Chesapeake Bay retriever. Santos said the breed of dog is known for such traits as dedication, unswerving devotion, commitment, strong physical abilities and courage. "The membership slide has stopped. We are proceeding up the membership ladder," he said. "A group of committed and dedicated Legionnaires will lead the climb. The group will be known as 'Ric's Retrievers.'"

Santos said increased membership numbers will improve the Legion's ability to serve the nation's veterans, their families and members of communities across the country.

"When I was department com-

mander in 1990-1991, my theme was 'Membership and Service.' Membership and service do go hand-in-hand," he said. "If we have membership growth, we will have the finances to fund and the manpower to operate our service programs."

"Serving together, we will make a difference in the lives and interests of our nation's veterans, their families and the people of our communities, states and nation." □

Steve Brooks is editor of The American Legion Dispatch and a contributing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Article design: Holly K. Soria

National Commander Richard J. "Ric" Santos and Auxiliary President Sherry McLaughlin sworn to convention delegates. *Tom Strattman*



Convention awards

The 83rd National Convention once again provided a forum for The American Legion's numerous yearly awards.

Spirit of Service Awards

Enlisted armed services members honored for volunteering in their local communities

ARMY

SpC. Jousette Durkop

NAVY

Petty Officer 2nd Class Anjail F. Weaver

MARINE CORPS

Sgt. Charles T. Crossfield

COAST GUARD

Petty Officer 2nd Class

Charles C. Martin

AIR FORCE

Staff Sgt. Joseph Cormier

Youth Program Honorees

BOYS NATION PRESIDENT

Evan Wilson

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS CHAMPION

Brandon Green

NATIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST CHAMPION

Caleb D. Williams

EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR

Michael Beckel

2000 BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Joshua R. Zender

Fourth Estate Award for outstanding journalism

Tammy Pearson, assistant managing editor for the Marion, Ind., *Chronicle-Tribune*, for the 120-page, 10-month series "Moment of Truth," which dealt with problems facing the newspaper's community and how those problems should be resolved.

William Randolph Hearst Americanism Trophy

Department of Ohio

Frank N. Belgrano Trophy

Department of New Jersey for its support of the Boy Scouts.

Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy

Department of Florida for showing the greatest Americanism activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards.

Employer of the Year

For companies and businesses dedicated to hiring veterans.

SMALL BUSINESS

Discount Printing, Winter Haven, Fla.

MID-SIZE BUSINESS

Maine Machine Products Co.,

South Paris, Maine

LARGE BUSINESS

PEMCO Aeroplex, Birmingham, Ala.

National Law Enforcement

Officer of the Year

Minnesota State Patrol Cpl.

Jeffrey D. Goldsmith, Hutchinson, Minn.

Local Veterans

Representative of the Year

Michael E. Daugherty, Ponca City, Okla.

William F. Lenker

National Service Trophy

Department of Ohio for best supporting and implementing programs to benefit veterans and their families.

Garland Murphy Award

Department of Florida for providing the most contributions to the Children's Welfare Foundation.

CWF Legacy Award

Department of Pennsylvania for contributing the most funds to the Children's Miracle Network by the department's entire Legion family.

Braving the heat for Patriotism



Retired
Maj.
Gen.
Patrick
M. Brady
salutes
Old
Glory.

Mike Alvaro walked off the parade route, saxophone in hand. His brow was damp, his arms speckled with drops of sweat. And he loved every minute of it.

Alvaro, a member of Fort Cralo Post 471 of Rensselaer, N.Y., had just finished marching with the Yankee Doodle Band in The American Legion's 83rd National Convention Parade.

Not even temperatures in the high 90s, with humidity to match, could temper his enthusiasm.

"It's hot and humid, and I'm tired," said Alvaro, a World War II veteran. "But I've done this for 40 years, so what's the big deal? To me, it's dedication. We come here to do our job and do it to the best of our ability. That's what this is about."

Alvaro was one of approximately 3,000 members of The American Legion family who chose to brave the San Antonio heat and participate in the nearly three-hour parade. National Commander Ray G. Smith was there to the very

end, giving the thumbs-up to the Department of Texas delegation, the last to cross in front of the reviewing station.

Lt. Gen. Freddy E. McFarren, commanding general, 5th Army at Fort Sam Houston, served as the parade's grand marshal, while Past National Commander Al Lance was honorary grand marshal. The parade included six American Legion bands, two military bands and the band from John Marshall High School in San Antonio.

— Photos by Tom Stratman



The 2001 American Legion youth champions take part in the parade.

Tonawandas sweeps band competition



The American Legion Band of the Tonawandas won both the Concert Band and Parade Band competitions.

It was déjà vu all over again in the battle of Legion bands at the 83rd National Convention.

The American Legion Band of the Tonawandas from Tonawanda, N.Y., repeated as the Concert Band winner and also captured the Parade Band contest. The Tonawandas band was the Concert Band winner in 2000.

The Joliet American Legion Band of Joliet, Ill., finished second in both categories. The Oconomowoc American Legion Band, of Oconomowoc, Wis., finished third in the Concert Band competition, while the Waltham American Legion Band, of Waltham, Mass., placed third in the Parade Band contest.

Concert Band participants were judged on instrumentation, conducting, articulation, and intonation and repertoire skills.

Parade Band contestants were rated on musicianship, march and maneuver skills and general effect.

Tonawandas was named the National Commander's Band.



The parade provided patriotic moments for viewers of all ages.



Department of New York Legionnaires Edgar Smith of Post 1060, James Middleton of Post 1765 and Richard Hochbrueckner of Post 421 salute the colors during the Sunday parade.

Legion drill competition brings out the best

Drill units were again on display during the convention, competing for top honors in the Legion's Color Guard competition. The top three finishers in each of the categories were:

MILITARY CLASS
American Legion
Post 500, Speedway,
Ind.
American Legion
Post 10, Albany, Ore.
American Legion
Post 321, Plano, Texas

MILITARY OPEN CLASS
American Legion Post 86, Rockville, Md.
Sons of The American Legion Squadron 148, Baltimore
Sons of The American Legion Squadron 77, Easton, Md.

OPEN CLASS
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1830, Scottsville, N.Y.
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1, Rockland, Maine
American Legion Post 370, Louisiana, Mo.

THE NATIONAL COMMANDER'S COLOR GUARD
American Legion Post 86



Members of the Rockville, Md. Post 86 Color Guard placed first in Senior Military Open Class and named the National Commander's Color Guard.



Top: National Commander Ray G. Smith rides in the parade alongside his wife, Helen.

Above: Members of Team American Legion ride in formation at the convention parade.

Right: A high-horsepower Auxiliary member rumbles past onlookers at the parade.



An Airman rides a United States Air Force mini-jet past the parade reviewing stand.

Now, therefore, be it resolved...

AMERICANISM

Chairman Joseph E. Caouette Jr. (R-NH)

Res. No. 169 – Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance – Opposes any and all changes to the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance, as used in naturalization ceremonies, that would dilute or eliminate any of the following important and necessary elements of the oath: support for the Constitution of the United States of America; renunciation of all allegiances to foreign states or sovereigns; support for and defense of the U.S. Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; bear "true faith and allegiance" to the United States of America, and bear arms, perform noncombatant service or perform work of national importance on behalf of the United States of America.

Res. No. 170 – Veterans Day – Opposes any and all efforts that would designate Veterans Day on any day other than the traditional Nov. 11 date.

ECONOMICS

Chairman Robert E. David (S.C.)

Res. No. 25 – Preserve Priority of Service to Veterans in All One-Stop Centers – Affirms the practice and definition of "priority" and asks that such definition and practice be formally codified by the Congress in Title 38 United States Code, Chapter 41, and that the Secretary of Labor and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training regulate and extend the policy and practice of priority of service to all service providers in America's system of workforce development through the authority granted them under Section 4102 of Title 38 United States Code, opposes federal funding for any employment service provider unless it adopts as a policy that eligible veterans receive maximum priority of the above-noted services; seeks that Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative staff remain state employees, that they will work within the evolving system and that they will operate and maintain services to veterans as mandated by statute, and seeks that the One-Stop Centers work with the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service to ensure the operations of the One-Stop Centers meet or exceed the federally mandated service to veterans.

Res. No. 26 – Make TAP Training Available to All Separating and Retiring Personnel – Reiterates strong support for the Transition Assistance Program and supports making it permanent and requires that all service members be given an opportunity to participate in training not less than 90 days prior to their separation or retirement.

Res. No. 27 – Adequate Funding for Veterans' Employment and Training Service – Strongly encourages Congress and the Department of Labor to provide adequate funds to support the mission of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

Res. No. 28 – Support Reinvestment of Veterans' Employment and Training Service – Supports reconceptualization of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to make it more effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of America's veterans and supports all other efforts that will improve and expand the employment assistance this country provides to former members of the armed forces.

Res. No. 30 – Support Further Study of Licensure and Certification Requirements – Supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; seeks that the armed forces and the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that service members are informed about any licensure or certification they may be required to meet when they enter the civilian workforce; supports making the Montgomery GI Bill eligibility available to pay for all necessary civilian licensure and certification requirements, including necessary training and entry courses; supports efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military; and urges the Congress, the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor to fund a study of the effect of civilian licensure and certification requirements on all military occupational specialties identified by the study undertaken by the Congressional Employment and Training Study Group.

Res. No. 31 – Support Revision of Veterans' Employment and Training Service Performance Standards – Seeks and supports a revision of existing Veterans' Employment and Training Service reporting requirements for measuring performance standards and for determining compliance with requirements for measuring employment services to veterans.

Res. No. 32 – The National Veterans' Training Institute – Strongly encourages Congress and the Department of Labor to provide adequate funds to support the National Veterans' Training Institute.

Res. No. 33 – Veterans Hiring Preference for Federal Contractors – Urges Congress to amend the covered groups under Section 4212, Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code by removing the terms "Vietnam era" and "special disabled" and replacing with "veteran" and "special emphasis on disabled veterans."

Res. No. 60 – Oppose the Transfer of Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs – Opposes all legislative efforts to transfer the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Res. No. 81 – Remove Delimiting Date for Using the GI Bill – Supports retaining the 10-year delimiting period for veterans to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits, urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide a waiver to any eligible veteran beyond the 10-year limit on a case-by-case basis.

Res. No. 141 – Oppose Eliminating or Contracting Out of Veterans Employment and Training Programs to Contractors – Vigorously opposes the contracting out of the DVOP and LVER program or removal of the enabling and resourcing provisions of the United States Code that provide for: (1) The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program; (2) The Local Veterans' Employment Representative Program; (3) The National Veterans Training Institute; and (4) Wagner-Peyser State Employment Service Grants.

Res. No. 164 – National Employment Service Award Recipients – Continues to recognize National Employment Service Award winners at The American Legion National Convention.

Res. No. 12 – Support the Small Business Administration – Supports the efforts of the United States Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Affairs in its initiatives to provide outreach to military personnel who may be affected by the downsizing of the military and supports legislation that would permit the Office of Veterans' Affairs of the U.S. Small Business Administration to enter into contracts, grants and cooperative agreements to further its outreach goals.

Res. No. 14 – Help for Veteran-Owned Businesses – Strongly encourages the Congress of the United States to require and vigorously support federal procurements and contracts for businesses owned and operated by veterans and for those veteran businesses as affected by base closings and reduction in our military forces.

Res. No. 35 – Home Loan Guaranty Program – Seeks that the Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty limit be raised to at least \$250,000 and also be geographically adjusted as local markets dictate.

Res. No. 101 – Major Enhancements for the Montgomery GI Bill – Supports passage of major enhancements to the current All-Volunteer Force Education Assistance Program, better known as the Montgomery GI Bill, to include the following: The dollar amount of the entitlement should be indexed to the average cost of college education including tuition,

fees, textbooks and other supplies for a commuter student at an accredited university, college or trade school for which they qualify; the educational cost index should be reviewed and adjusted annually; a monthly tax-free subsistence allowance indexed for inflation must be part of the educational assistance package; enrollment in the Montgomery GI Bill shall be automatic upon enlistment; however, benefits will not be awarded unless eligibility criteria have been met; the current military payroll deduction GI-2000 requirement for enrollment in Montgomery GI Bill must be terminated; if a veteran enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill acquired educational loans prior to enlisting in the armed forces, Montgomery GI Bill benefits may be used to repay existing educational loans; if a veteran enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill receives eligible training and rehabilitation under Chapter 31 of Title 38, United States Code, the veteran shall not receive less educational benefits than otherwise eligible to receive under Montgomery GI Bill; a veteran may request an accelerated payment of all monthly educational benefits upon meeting the criteria for eligibility for Montgomery GI Bill financial payments, with the payment provided directly to the educational institution; separating servicemembers and veterans seeking a license or credential must be able to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits to pay for the cost of taking any written national exam or other measuring device; eligible veterans shall have 10 years after discharge to utilize Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits; eligible members of the Select Reserve, who qualify for Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits shall receive not more than half of the tuition assistance and subsistence allowance payable under the Montgomery GI Bill and have up to five years from their date of separation to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Chairman William M. Bishop (Alaska)

Res. No. 44 – Support for Taiwan – Supports and encourages the continued sales of U.S. military and security equipment to Taiwan, including such weapons as Aegis-equipped destroyers, Kidd-class guided-missile destroyers, diesel-electric submarines, M-K48 torpedoes, P-3C Orion anti-submarine aircraft, anti-missile systems, heavy artillery, so that the Republic of China can maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

Res. No. 22 – Opposition to Trade with China – Asks the Congress to reverse its policy of trade liberalization with the People's Republic of China and to encourage the United States Trade Relations and that the American people be urged to refrain from purchasing goods made in the People's Republic of China.

Resolution No. 69 – Priority POW/MIA Actions – Urges the President of the United States of America and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who remain missing in action; pledges The American Legion will continue to exert the maximum effort to account for MIAs from World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia and the Cold War, and, believes the following priority actions should be taken by the U.S. government: Continue to provide sufficient personnel and resources so that investigative efforts of World War II, Cold War and Korean War POW/MIA status can be broadened and accelerated; continue to provide necessary resources to field operations can be conducted at a maximum rate of activity with more timely follow-up of live sighting reports; and continue to declassify all POW/MIA information (except that revealing intelligence sources or methods) in a form readily available to public review.

Res. No. 70 – United Nations – Urges the U.S. government to seek the following reforms in the use of the American veto in the Security Council to obtain their desired ends; Encourage the United Nations to focus on limited, necessary, achievable tasks that truly better the lot of humankind in a sensible, cost-effective manner; encourage the United Nations not to infringe on national sovereignty when operating economic and social programs; adopt weighted voting procedures in the General Assembly, allocating voting power in relation to the size of each state; encourage member states to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice to the International Court of Justice and ensure that UN agencies become subject to periodic, unannounced auditing, the finding of such audits to be reported to member nations; admit the Republic of China to full membership in the United Nations since that nation has fulfilled all that is expected of a developing country by adopting democracy, respect for human rights, free enterprise and a peaceful foreign policy, and establish an equitable fiduciary relationship between the United States and the United Nations.

Res. No. 71 – Vietnam POW/MIA Policy – Urges the administration to maintain a serious oversight of the Vietnamese government to insure that the pledges made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are honestly fulfilled; requests that in the absence of fulfillment of these pledges, the American Legion opposes any further economic and political steps to improve bilateral relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and calls on Congress to oppose further steps on this same basis.

Res. No. 72 – Japanese Compensation and Equity to America's POWs – Demands that the Japanese government and Japanese corporations who employed American POWs in slave labor during World War II issue an unequivocal apology for their heinous actions; supports efforts by the U.S. Congress that would facilitate legal actions by former POWs taken against the Japanese government and Japanese corporations to force reparations; and supports other appropriate means and remedies to achieve equity and fairness for these courageous veterans.

Res. No. 100 – America's Future – Recognizes the unprecedented changes throughout the world and urges the U.S. government to adopt a bipartisan national security – foreign policy of "democratic activism" promoting democratic values, maintaining adequate military strength to deter or defeat aggression, cooperating with allies, and encouraging free and fair trade.

Res. No. 172 – Support for the Republic of Korea – Urges the government of the United States to support the Republic of Korea by authorizing the sale of sophisticated weapons systems to the Republic of Korea to safeguard her freedom and protect security in the Asian-Pacific region and encourages the government of the United States to maintain a strong policy to bear on North Korea to reduce its military forces and to engage in serious discussions with the Republic of Korea to toward bringing a lasting peace to the Korean peninsula.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Chairman Herman G. Harrington (N.Y.)

Res. No. 94 – National D-Day Museum – Supports the mission of the National D-Day Museum, without financial obligation, in New Orleans, which seeks to preserve the memoirs and inspire the youth of the United States to the valor and sacrifice of the men and women of the Allied Forces in World War II; and encourages all department offices to publicize the mission of the Museum and in particular the events surrounding the dedication of the Pacific Wing of the Museum, Dec. 6, 2001, and all posts are encouraged herewith to notify their respective members of these events.

Res. No. 10 – World War II Memorial – Supports the construction and completion of the National World War II Memorial without further delay.

Res. No. 107 – Blue Star Service Banner Program – Vigorously promotes the use of the "Blue Star Service Banner" throughout the United States by encouraging Legionnaires and Local American Legion posts to purchase and present Blue Star Service Banners to the families of service members who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, and to offer assistance, information, and services to military personnel and their families, when needed, as part of the Reconnect program.

Res. No. 171 – Appreciation to Host City – Expresses deep appreciation to the Department of Texas, Gov. Rick Perry, Mayor Ed Garza, the city officials of San Antonio, including

the Fire Department, Police Department, and other Public Safety Officials, and to the 2001 National Convention Corporation Officials, John Morris, president. Around this nucleus has been built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable convention.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Chairman Allen L. Titus (Ind.)

Res. No. 61 – Military Funeral Honors – Reaffirms that the Congress mandate and appropriately fund the Department of Defense and the military services, to include recruiting the National Guard, so as to provide military honors upon request at veterans' funerals in coordination with veterans service organizations such as The American Legion at local levels; that Legion posts and departments be encouraged to participate with the military in the rendering of funeral honors to veterans; urges that the Department of Defense implement equitable and expedient reimbursement procedures for members of the veterans service organizations who participate in military funeral honors; and urges that veterans of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard be authorized to receive military funeral honors from those Military Services.

Res. No. 62 – Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program – Recommends that the Department of Defense expeditiously develop a second manufacturer of anthrax vaccine, and in the quantities necessary, which should be funding, credibility and FDA inspection issues which are currently under criticism; urges the Department of Defense to re-evaluate the Anthrax Vaccination Program and maintain individual medical records with the greatest of accuracy; and urges both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to provide timely medical assistance and health care to those participants who experience vaccination reactions.

Res. No. 63 – Department of Defense Health Care for Military Beneficiaries – Recommends the following guidelines be incorporated as a coherent part of the Department of Defense TRICARE health care package, or any military health care package, for military retirees, dependents and military survivors: The U.S. government must honor its obligation to provide for the medical health care to military retirees in exchange for their numerous sacrifices made under decades of service to the nation; timely access to a continuum of quality, comprehensive and equitable health-care benefits covering the full array of services ranging from preventive health-care and dental treatment plans to prescription services for all military beneficiaries, regardless of age or health care status should be provided; access, and administration, barriers to an effective TRICARE system to include inefficient business practices such as benefit portability, claims processing, and delays in claims payments need to be removed; that the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program, which is available to Medicare-eligible military retirees, their dependents and military survivors and who now have access to the national mail order program and retail pharmacies since April 1, 2001, be fully funded; that the TRICARE Senior Prime Medicare subtraction demonstration program be made permanent and extended nationwide to all military treatment facilities (MTFs) and available to all Medicare-eligible military retirees residing stateside as well as outside the continental United States; that TRICARE for Life, to include TRICARE as a second payer, be fully funded; full access of military retirees and their dependents be extended to VA and DoD medical facilities for TRICARE and Medicare-eligible military retirees and their dependents; and that all military beneficiaries have access to VA pharmacies; that dual eligible disabled retirees continue to receive health care from both military treatment facilities and VA medical centers; that adequate military medical personnel, to include graduates of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences and members of the Commissioned Officer Corps of the United States Navy, be recruited and assigned active duty to provide health care for active duty and retired military personnel and their dependents; that all military beneficiaries be authorized to receive annual oral examinations at military treatment facilities; and that a joint military medical command be authorized to integrate and optimize capacities, capabilities and cost effectiveness of medical services at military treatment facilities and the military services.

Res. No. 64 – United States Army Rangers and Black Berets – Reaffirms that military berets or any United States military uniform items, equipment, systems and components be procured only from American sources in accordance with "Buy American" laws.

Res. No. 65 – Reforming the Military Absentee Voting System – Urges that appropriate laws and guidelines be developed at federal, state and local levels with the intent that all military absentee voters and their families will have their votes counted in every election; that the satisfactorily drafted uniform acts and/or regulations, developed with the assistance of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, are made available to all appropriate state and local election entities; and that The American Legion state an advocate role on this vital issue at national, state and local levels.

Res. No. 66 – The Uniformed Services University of The Health Sciences – Urges the Congress to continue its determination to retain and expand the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and the Uniformed Services University of The Health Sciences as a continued source of uniformed physicians, advanced practice nurses, and scientists dedicated to careers of service in the Army, Navy, Air Force and the United States Public Health Service; and strongly supports new construction at the university to fulfill the urgent need for small classrooms and housing for the Graduate School of Nursing.

Res. No. 68 – The Korean Defense Service Medal – Urges the Congress and the Department of Defense to authorize the funding and presenting of the Korean Defense Service Medal to those United States military personnel and veterans who served in defense of the Republic of Korea and who were prominently involved in the conflict.

Res. No. 122 – Medal of Honor for Dorie Miller – Urges the Congress of the United States to award the nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor, posthumously, to Dorie Miller, United States Navy, and that the nation fully acknowledge his distinguished devotion to duty, extreme courage and the total disregard of his own safety during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Res. No. 132 – Support for the Maritime Administration – Supports the retention of the U.S. Maritime Administration, strongly opposes any plan to eliminate the Maritime Administration thus putting the economic and national security of America in jeopardy, urges the U.S. Congress and President Bush to oppose any bill that would dismantle the U.S. Maritime Administration and the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Res. No. 133 – Commercial Shipbuilding for Defense – Urges the president and Congress to boost naval budgets, promote commercial shipbuilding, expand the use of U.S. flagships in world commerce and resist foreign actions that would further damage America's defense industrial base.

Res. No. 134 – Retention of the United States Marine Academy and State Academies – Supports maintaining the United States Merchant Marine Academy and the six state Merchant Marine academies.

Res. No. 139 – Exoneration of Capt. McVay, USS Indianapolis – Requests that the president issue an executive order overturning Capt. Charles McVay's conviction, exoneration posthumously, and that a Presidential Unit Citation be awarded to every crew member of the USS Indianapolis.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

Chairman Thomas P. Cadmus (Mich.)

Res. No. 1 – Quality Care for Mentally Ill Veterans – Urges Congress to mandate that

VA provide the best possible quality of care for mentally ill veterans, irrespective of the cost of prescription medication, and strongly reaffirms its commitment that all veterans are entitled to the absolute best state-of-the-art treatment, irrespective of cost and that the diagnosis and treatment of each veteran should be evidence-based and in the best judgment of the attending physician.

Res. No. 23 – Support the Automatic Waiver Debts of \$250 or Less – Requests the Congress of the United States amend title 38, United States Code, to state that any alleged overpayment in the amount of \$250 or less be granted an automatic waiver.

Res. No. 47 – Relocate the Denver VAMC to the Former Fitzsimmons Army Hospital – Supports relocating the Denver VA Medical Center from its current location in Denver, Colo., to the previous site of the Fitzsimmons Army Hospital; encourages VA to immediately develop a plan to relocate the Denver VAMC to the former site of Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center, and urges VA to coordinate the proposed relocation of the Denver VAMC exploring the opportunity to develop new concepts in cooperative agreements and sharing of state of the art facilities to coincide with the planned relocation of the University of Colorado Health Science Center.

Res. No. 58 – Remove 30-year Delimiting Date for Agent Orange Claims – Fully supports the removal of the 30-year delimiting date on all veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

Res. No. 59 – The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses – Encourages the Department of Veterans Affairs to devote the appropriate resources to finding effective medical treatments to alleviate the unexplained physical symptoms of Gulf War veterans; requests that the Department of Veterans Affairs fund more scientific studies that exclusively investigate the health of women Gulf War veterans; encourages the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly implement any reasonable recommendations contained in Institute of Medicine reports regarding Gulf War veterans' illnesses; and research, encourages the scientific community to focus its efforts on the most likely causes of Gulf War veterans' illnesses and to refrain from supporting or encouraging investigations of risk factors that are not likely related to Gulf War veterans' illnesses; encourages the Department of Defense to not use investigational drugs on U.S. troops without their informed consent; and encourages the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop the health care and compensation to disabled Gulf War veterans who suffer from unexplained physical symptoms, or medically unexplained symptom syndromes similar to chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia, requests VA continue to develop the Persian Gulf Registry, and pledges that The American Legion will continue to consult with medical experts from time to time to ensure the effectiveness of the Registry.

Res. No. 84 – Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Remove the Specific Dates for the Award of DIC Benefits for Surviving Spouses of Former POWs – States The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to amend section 1318 of title 38, United States Code, to remove the date of Sept. 30, 1999, and substitute "who died any time after discharge from active duty and who were rated totally disabled for over one year."

Res. No. 85 – Allow Veterans to Retain \$90 of Their Compensation While in Medicaid-Covered Homes – Pledges that The American Legion shall sponsor and support legislation to change the Medicaid-covered nursing home care provision to allow veterans who are receiving compensation to keep \$90 of their cash for incidental expenses.

Res. No. 109 – The Operations in Lebanon, Grenada and Panama as "Periods of War" – Urges Congress and the President to enact legislation to include in the definition "period of war" in Subsection 11, Section 101, Title 38, United States Code, the following periods as "periods of war": the operations in Lebanon in 1958 and 1982-1984, Grenada

Res. No. 120 – Reduce Disability Requirements for Non-Service-Connected Pension – Supports legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 1501 to restore the special consideration of age in determinations of entitlement to nonservice-connected pension by providing that the disability requirement at age 55 shall be 60 percent; at age 60, the requirement shall be reduced to 50 percent; and at age 65, the disability requirement shall be reduced to have been zero.

Res. No. 121 – Special Pension for World War I Veterans – Supports legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, so as to provide that The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay to each veteran of World War I, who meets the service requirements set forth in Title 38, United States Code 1512(b), a special pension in the amount of \$150 per month; such special pension shall be paid without regard to (1) any income of any kind payable to the veteran's spouse; and (2) the corpus of the veteran's estate; and any eligible veteran in receipt of pension under Title 38, United States Code 1512 may also receive such special pension.

Res. No. 131 – Additional National Cemeteries in Florida – Urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to establish additional national cemeteries in geographical areas of the State of Florida and that these sites will be established based on current and projected geographical needs.

Res. No. 156 – Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program – Supports amendments to Title 38, United States Code, to accomplish the following: Establish the pension rates of surviving spouses at 90 percent of the rate for a veteran without dependents; establish the pension rate for a surviving child at 90 percent of the rate for a veteran without dependents; delete the requirement that the income and corpus of estate of a person legally responsible for the support of a surviving child be counted in the determination of annual income of such child; provide that when two veterans who meet the service, disability and income requirements for pension claim shall be paid without regard to one another, each veteran shall be paid as a single veteran without dependents reduced by the amount of countable family income; exclude in the determination of annual income payments all proceeds from government life insurance policies; and change the effective date for reduction or discontinuance of pension based on a change of income from the last day of the month in which the change occurred to the last day of the calendar year in which the change occurred.

Res. No. 160 – The American Legion Policy on the National Cemetery Administration – Supports the establishment of additional national and state veterans cemeteries and columbaria wherever a need for them is apparent and petition Congress to provide required operations and construction funding to ensure VA burial in a national or state veterans cemetery. The American Legion opposes any legislation that would preclude any attempt, now or in the future, to collect "user fees" for burials in any national or state veterans cemetery; supports restoration of a veterans' burial allowance and an increase in the burial benefit, along with restoration of the pre-1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act criteria to provide eligibility for a government furnished headstone or marker allowance and restoration and increase of the burial plot allowance; and supports action to provide that when an eligible veteran dies in a state veterans hospital or nursing home, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay for the cost of transporting the remains to the place of burial as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Res. No. 161 – The American Legion Policy on Entitlement to VA Headstones – Supports enactment of all VA policies disallowing veterans to an application for a grave marker provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, without regard to whatever other private monument or headstone that may already be in place at the time of application.

Res. No. 168 – Oppose Consolidation/Regionalization of Claims Processing – Opposes any efforts to consolidate, regionalize or centralize any VA claims adjudication activities that abrogate the authority or jurisdiction of the local VA regional office.

Roster for a New Legion Year

Terry D. Lewis

National Vice Commander
Northeast Region



Home: Philadelphia

Legion membership: 19 years, Post 881

Military service: U.S. Marine Corps, 1967-1971

Occupation: Philadelphia Parking Authority

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1989-1990; Dept. Cmdr., 2000-2001; Dept. Vice Cmdr., 1995-1996

National positions: Security Cmsn., National Security Cncl.

Region includes: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

Charles Ralph John

National Vice Commander
Central Region



Home: Duncan, Okla.

Legion membership: 17 years, Post 55

Military service: U.S. Air Force, 1952-1955

Occupation: Halliburton Services (ret.)

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., Dept. Vice Cmdr., 1992-1993; Dept. Cmdr., 1993-1994; Dist. Cmdr., 1990-1992; Dist. Cmdr., Dept. Exec. Cmte., 1988-1992

National positions: Internal Affairs Cmsn., Cmsn. on Children & Youth, Alt. Natl. Exec. Cmte., Constitution and By-Laws Cmte.

Region includes: Alabama, Arkansas, France, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas

Dr. David F. Russell

National Chaplain



Home: Spotsylvania, Va.

Legion membership: 15 years, Post 320

Military service: U.S. Air Force, 1949-1952

Occupation: Ordained Baptist minister, Bible teacher

Legion highlights: Dept. Chaplain, 1991-1992, 1995-1996, 1997-2002

Russell H. Hanseter

National Vice Commander
Midwest Region



Home: Seymour, Wis.

Legion membership: 38 years, Post 106

Military service: U.S. Navy, 1952-1956

Occupation: High school biology teacher (ret.)

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1967-68, 1991-1992; Dept. Vice Cmdr., 1994-1995; Dept. Cmdr., 1995-1996; Dept. Boys State Director, 1998-2001

National positions: Legislative Cmsn.

Region includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

James F. Mareschal Sr.

National Vice Commander
Southeast Region



Home: St. Louis

Legion membership: 24 years, Post 444

Military service: U.S. Army, 1961-1963

Occupation: Structural steel ironworker

(ret.)

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1985-1986; Dept. Vice Cmdr., 1990-1991; Dept. Cmdr., 1991-1992

National positions: Foreign Relations Cmsn., Cmte. on Committees

Region includes: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Walter L. Davis

National Historian



Home: Spring Arbor, Mich.

Legion membership: Nine years, Post 246

Military service: U.S. Army, 1965-1972; U.S. Army Reserve,

1981-2000

Occupation: Realtor

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., Post Adj., Dept. Finance Officer, Dept. Contest Supervisory Cmte. Chmn.

Dale Salmen

National Vice Commander
Western Region



Home: Round Mountain, Nev.

Legion membership: 19 years, Post 18

Military service: U.S. Army, 1966-1968

Occupation: Miner

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr., 1982-1985; Dept. Cmdr., 1990-1991; Dept. Oratorical Chair, 1997-2001; Dist. Cmdr., 1985-1988, 1992-1996

National positions: Constitution and Bylaws Cmte., Distinguished Guests Cmte., Alt. Natl. Exec. Cmte.

Region includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Mexico, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Philippines, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Raymond P. Jacquez

National Sergeant-at-Arms



Home: Laurel, Md.

Legion membership: 36 years, Post 60

Military service: U.S. Army, 1947-1969

Occupation:

Parole/probation officer (ret.)

Legion highlights: Post Adj., Dept. Exec. Cmte., Dist., County and Post Judge Advocate; Dept. Constitution and Bylaws Chmn., Dept. License Tag Chmn.

National positions: Constitution and Bylaws Cmte.

Joseph Miller

Aide to the National Commander



Home: Greenbelt, Md.

Legion membership: 36 years, Post 136

Military service:

Navy, 1963-64

Occupation: Retired from U.S. Geological

Survey

Legion highlights: Post Cmdr. 1983-84; Post Adjutant, 1998; County Cmdr., 1989-90

National Positions: Foreign Relations Cmsn.

Photos by Tom Stratman

Colors of Courage

- SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION -

by Tom Nielsen



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honors all veterans and members of America's Armed Forces

Flying proudly before America's "Colors," our national symbol clutches streamers representing WWI Victory, WWII Victory, POW, Korean Service, Vietnam Service, Southwest Asia Service (Desert Storm) - and in this special limited edition only - the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

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Sizing Up America's BANKS

What is lost and what is gained when the hometown bank becomes part of something bigger?

BY GURNEY WILLIAMS III

The smallest bank in the United States is located in a 97-year-old two-story, red-brick building that stands out like an antique of the early 20th century. It's easy to find in the modest downtown of Lowes, Ky., amid a grocery store, funeral parlor, real estate and auction office, two beauty shops, two churches and no traffic lights to slow the pace of this 200-resident community.

The Bank of Lowes, with total assets of only about \$1.2 million, recently became another player in a big trend that has transformed the way millions of Americans handle their money. The family that owned the Main Street institution for almost 60 years has sold it to an attorney from Georgia, "a nice family man," says Lowes' vice chairwoman, Dorothy McClellan, 64.

The transaction plunges the local landmark, now named Heritage First Bank, into the green sea of mergers and acquisitions where for much of the past decade big financial fish have been swallowing smaller ones at a voracious rate. The number of mergers in this feeding frenzy actually peaked in 1995 at about 600, but has remained high with 453 last year alone.

Is all of this buying and merging good for Americans? As with most financial statements, there are two sides to the ledger. The bottom line – balancing what's gained against what's lost by bank mergers – isn't clear as black and white. Some experts say there is probably room for mom-and-pop banks and mega-

merger giants, both in the same town.

A Financial Family. The Bank of Lowes looks like a stage set that someone forgot to dismantle. "You know the kind of places in the movies where Jesse James goes to rob those old banks?" McClellan says. "That's exactly what we look like." Three teller cages. Wall safe. A staff of four that knows the name – and a good bit of the credit history – of everyone in town. Everything but eyeshades, spurs and spittoons.

Changes resulting from the sale of the Bank of Lowes aren't immediately evident to those who come in from the farms nearby where beans and corn, wheat and tobacco nourish the local economy. McClellan still addresses the envelopes for customer statements by hand. "It's faster to write them out than it is to put them in the typewriter," she explains. Besides, nobody sells the ribbons for the two ancient black Royal typewriters in the bank. Machine print is pale compared with McClellan's strong handwriting.

The key advantage of the small bank – where customers expect to be treated like family – is practiced here. Lowes still makes a loan the old-fashioned way, after McClellan and her brother, bank President Jack Wilkerson, talk about the application. "One little old lady, her last loan was maybe \$35 to \$50," says President Wilkerson, who approved the woman's application without a formal meeting with his sister. Number of mortgages granted last year:

Two. When someone overdraws, McClellan gets on the phone and says, "You know what? We gotta have a deposit from you right now."

Her brother grumbles amiably: "She spoils all the customers."

"I'm sure if something happened to me, they'd save my neck if they could," says Clara Reisner, who runs the grocery store across the street from the bank.

Banks like this offer nimble decision-making on farm or business loans, according to the Independent Community Bankers of America, a Washington-based advocate and lobbying group for some 5,300 small banks in the United States. Community banks channel most of their loans to the neighborhoods where their customers reside and work. Bank officers live in the same neighborhoods and generally make themselves accessible to their customers, while "CEOs at mega-banks are often headquartered in office suites, away from daily customer dealings," the ICBA argues.

Running a community bank reminds Robert N. Barsness, president of Prior Lake State Bank in Prior Lake, Minn., of his service as a Marine Corps artillery officer. "We always did more with less," the retired major says. "In Vietnam, we didn't have a lot of stuff, and the equipment was old. But people had





Sam Bank" for

catering to military

personnel – in 1942. He

kept the account through World

War II after his B-17 "Flying

Fortress" bomber was shot down,

and he spent two years in a German

prison camp. After the war, "Where-

ever I was stationed, I'd set up a

new account," he says. He estab-

lished accounts at 10 or 15 different

banks, he says, as he moved from

base to base until his retirement as a

colonel in 1971. But he never closed

his Fort Sam Bank account, even

after the Bank of America bought it

and changed its name in 1999 to the

Bank of America Military Bank.

BOA has \$642 billion in total assets,

the largest holding in the United

States and more than 500,000 times

bigger than the Bank of Lowes.

The net result of the acquisition

to Trojan: He says he's happy be-

cause the same people he's known

and liked for years still work

there. He found it easy to get a

home-equity loan from BOA, and

he was satisfied with its 7-percent

rate. Some bank features have im-

proved, he says. Trojan now pays

all his bills through his computer,

saving postage and gaining time.

And now there are more ATM ma-

chines where he can get cash,

without paying a transaction fee.

More is better: that's the selling

point that drove merger mania in

the 1990s, fueled by the Riegle-Neal

Interstate Banking and Branching

Efficiency Act of 1994. The federal

law allows banks to branch across

you're in trouble," warns

Richard J. Rosen, assistant professor of finance at Indiana University and a former economist for the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve.

For now, there's no sign of trouble at the Bank of Lowes as it morphs into its new identity. In fact the previous owners, still on the job, are excited about the change. For the first time, early this year, the bank fired up two computers and began dealing with a home office out of state. Dorothy McClellan doesn't expect to be writing out those addresses much longer. The new owner plans to help the bank grow and be able to offer loans larger than the previous cap of \$59,000.

Still, Reisner, the grocer, says she's worried that her banker friends across the street will retire. She's opposed in general to bank acquisitions and mergers. "I'm sure it's good for the economy," she says. "The more money you work with, the more you can give the people. But it's just not personal. You're just a number."

Power in Numbers. Thirty years of service in the U.S. Air Force taught Joseph "Jay" Trojan of Houston a lot about banking. He opened an account at the National Bank of Fort Sam Houston – famous as "Fort

pride in fixing it and making it work." In his bank, with \$105 million in assets, he says, "Good people working hard can get a lot more done than bureaucracies [in large banks] sitting around and talking." In a loan application at Prior Lake, Barsness says, "the person across the desk has a big share of the decision-making process." That often means same-day approval.

Such advantages, coupled with good management, have left surviving small banks in surprisingly good shape in the wake of the consolidation revolution. "There's been a shakeout among them in the past 15 years," says Ross Waldrop, a statistician who tracks the strengths and weaknesses of all 8,315 U.S. commercial banks at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in Washington. The total number of banks has dropped by more than a third over the past 15 years. "We've seen a Darwin type of exercise," Waldrop says. The survivors tend to be fiscally fit.

But what happens when the neighborhood bank's neighborhood runs into hard times? Some bank observers say small banks' sensitivity to local issues won't necessarily protect them. "If you're a very small bank in Kentucky and your local economy gets in trouble,

Small Banks



Community banks recycle dollars in their local economies.

BY GEORGE W. HAMLIN IV

Independent banking, or "community banking," is as distinctive a value today, in an era of rapid banking-industry consolidation, as it ever has been. These values can be seen at the consumers' level and in the role that banking plays in underwriting the economic development of local communities.

But first some statistics: Twenty years ago there were 14,300 FDIC-insured commercial banks in the country. Today there are 8,315. Back then, 40 percent of household deposits were held by the banking industry; today that share has shrunk to 14 percent.

Where did the money go? It was converted into investments in mutual funds and money-market funds, essentially securities, rather than bank deposits. The problem is, as a consequence, these funds are no longer available to make business loans and home mortgages but are invested instead in other things outside the community. In addition, within the banking industry itself, there has been a considerable consolidation. That is, 84 percent of the banking assets are now held by 315 very large banks, leaving only 16 percent of the banking assets in the hands of the remaining 8,000 community banks.

In the public's mind, small banks have the reputation of delivering friendly, personal service. "Neighbors helping neighbors" is the tag line. Prices are affordable and sometimes free. Why? Because community banks balance priorities different-

state lines. There's some evidence that the resulting boom in consolidation - which had begun even before the act - has been good for the banking business. On average, institutions with assets of more than \$1 billion are more efficient businesses than smaller banks, according to FDIC figures. The secret is they can centralize some of their fixed costs. A single data-processing center, for example, can serve many branches. That's good for a bank's bottom line, and it can be good for customers like Trojan. "The larger they are, the better able they are to offer additional and more sophisticated services," like extra ATMs and credit cards, says FDIC statistician Waldrop.

The sheer size of a bank like BOA means that it can reach millions of customers and even play a behind-the-scenes role in American culture. The Bank of America provides about 1,100 mortgages a day - averaging about one every 80 seconds - and claims that it can pre-qualify applicants at its Web site in less than 10 minutes online. Total ATMs: 14,000. Total number of banking centers: 4,500 in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

Tom Myrick, senior vice president, consumer marketing programs, says BOA isn't about to cede any ground to small banks on the customer-service front. A diverse menu of personalized services includes photo-identification credit cards, investment advice, insurance policies, round-the-clock accessibility and a personal banker assigned to every customer. Most small banks can't offer all of this, Myrick says.

The size of a bank like BOA also makes it, and others like it, easy targets for critics. Some take aim at customer service. "Getting spotty," writes one anonymous customer, grumbling about BOA on a Web-site bulletin board. "Response to e-mail takes forever." Myrick acknowledges that service can suffer for a month or two in the wake of a merger but adds that regular surveys indicate consumer satisfaction has been climbing steadily throughout the BOA system.

James W. Brock, an economics professor at Miami of Ohio University, argues that consolidations, in general, can cause consumer trauma "as you wait on hold for what

Big Banks



New law gave rise to one-stop financial-service industry in America.

BY JERRY GILLASPIA

Instead of buying insurance at one company, stocks and bonds at another, and checking accounts and CDs at a bank, consumers can consolidate all of their financial services with a few providers or just one. One-stop shopping is no longer the exclusive domain of retailers; it is the prevailing trend among larger financial institutions in America. That's due to the historic Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999. It dismantled Depression-era laws - which put banks and other competitors in regulatory boxes - and allows banking, securities and insurance firms to join together in one enterprise.

The new law created the potential for unprecedented convenience, competitive pricing and more choice than ever before for consumers.

As a result of Gramm-Leach-Bliley, more banks will affiliate with insurance companies, more insurance companies will join with asset-management companies and more brokerage firms will merge with banks. Even more consolidation is ahead.

The financial-services industry still is very fragmented. Wal-Mart, for example, controls about 45 percent of the discount department-store market. Citigroup, the nation's largest financial services company, has only about 4-percent market share. Larger, diversified financial-services companies will be able to operate more efficiently, com-

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ly than larger institutions. The owners – shareholders – are generally people who reside in town. Likewise, the directors, officers and employees are members of the same community. Their children go to school together there.

When it comes to making deposits, or the recycling of them in the form of loans, the “who” and “where” of that process is influenced by what is familiar and is done in accord with local priorities. For example, it takes 20 deposit accounts of \$5,000 each to underwrite a single \$100,000 mortgage loan. Most deposits tend to be owned by people older than 50 who are not using their dollars any more for building families or businesses, whereas the borrowers tend to be younger than 50 and are in need of funds to expand family or business activities.

In a very real sense, an independent bank manages the financial resources of its community. That’s a great philosophy and good business. Providing an equipment loan for the local dry cleaner provides a ready and accessible service for the members of the community. Doing the same for a small manufacturing concern provides jobs for those who live locally so that they can afford to patronize the dry cleaner, and everyone has some deposits with the bank. This is recycling at its best: deposits, loans, jobs and deposits.

Individual customers of banks today are seeking safe places to hold their funds, process their payments and provide convenient access to the occasional loan. They are looking for financial-service providers who make them feel smart, comfortable and secure.

It matters now, more than ever, where you choose to bank and acquire your financial services. It is not just about the money, its safety and return, but also about who is managing it and how. □

George W. Hamlin IV is president and chief executive officer for Canandaigua National Bank and Trust Co. in Canandaigua, N.Y.

seems like all day just to talk with somebody.” Brock is more concerned about what might happen if even one large U.S. bank runs into financial trouble. “There is no evidence that they are more intelligent risk takers than small or medium-sized banks,” he says. “But they have a decisive advantage,” he warns. “They are considered too big to be allowed to fail.”

Bank on Continued Change. Waldrop at the FDIC says that since 1993, American banks have been on the kind of run that bankers love – record earnings each year until 2000, which was “still a very strong year,” he says. Consumers have more choices than they used to, with a wider range of services sometimes balanced by more fees and by what some consumers think is less-personalized attention. The banking business as a whole, Waldrop says, may be dividing into two extremes, with large full-spectrum banks at one end, and strong but small survivors at the other. In coming years, middle-sized banks with assets between \$1 billion and \$5 billion may find themselves too big to be community lenders exclusively, and too small to compete with the full-service mega-banks, he speculates.

Whatever happens next, our biggest and littlest banks in the future are likely to be vastly different from the institutions many Americans grew up with. Jay Trojan’s dad owned one of the classics: Bison State Bank in Bison, Okla. When Jay was a boy in the 1920s, his father sealed loans with a handshake. Once, he took a check written in charcoal on a wooden shingle. When his bank was decimated at the start of the Great Depression, “he paid off 100 percent on the dollar to every person who had an account,” Trojan says, much of it out of his own pocket. If his father could have seen what would happen to banking in America in the past 10 years alone, Trojan says, “I think he would have been astounded.” □

Gurney Williams III of New York City is an award-winning writer and frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

Article design: Doug Rollison

pete globally and give businesses greater access to capital.

Gramm-Leach-Bliley merely recognized the reality of what already had occurred in the marketplace. Banks today control less than 25 percent of the country’s financial assets, less than half of what they controlled just a few decades ago.

The distinctions among banks, securities firms and insurance companies have disappeared. They’re all competing for the same customers. They’re all part of the same industry – financial services. It has \$2.4 trillion in assets and is estimated to have grown by more than 25 percent the past three years alone. This new industry – years in the making – was created by deregulation, technology, over-capacity (too many banks chasing too few customers) and the emergence of the so-called “non-banks.”

Money-market funds now have more assets than all bank checking accounts. Mutual funds now have more assets under management than exist in the entire banking system. Stocks now account for almost one-fourth of U.S. household assets, exceeding even the value of our homes.

Despite consolidation and increased competition, many small banks will continue to thrive if they stay close to their customers, understand their needs and provide great service. The key, for small banks and large diversified financial services companies alike, will be who has the best people – talented, professional, caring people who take the time to understand their customers’ needs, ask the right questions, and provide the products and advice that will help satisfy all their customers’ financial needs and help them succeed. □

Jerry Gillaspia manages the Worldwide Military Banking market for Wells Fargo & Co., a \$290 billion diversified financial-services company with more than 5,400 stores, Internet and other distribution channels across North America and elsewhere in the world.

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The Power of Perseverance

Brooklawn, N.J., makes a habit of battling back to win American Legion Baseball World Series.

BY JEFF STOFFER

In an American Legion Baseball World Series loaded with heart-pumping comebacks and punctuated by an unlikely championship pairing, one of the most important lessons sports can teach was delivered over and over again at Parker Field in Yakima, Wash., in August. That would be the lesson about never giving up.

Brooklawn, N.J., Post 72, entered the national tournament with a 51-4 record, best among the eight regional champs from across the country. But it would take three big comebacks – including a four-run rally in the bottom of the ninth inning to win the semi-final game 10-9 over Omaha, Neb. – for the New Jersey club to earn its first title shot since winning it all in 1991. “They’ve been coming back all year,” said Joseph “Pops” Barth, who at Yakima celebrated his 50th season as Brooklawn’s manager with a 10th appearance in the ALWS. “These kids stuck together and got better every game.”

It was all about perseverance. And in the championship contest – a 5-2 win over the surprising Lewis-Clark Twins of Lewiston, Idaho, Post 13, who narrowly made the tournament with a 44-18 record – no one embodied that spirit like Brooklawn’s Mike Rucci.

Playing in an unprecedented fourth consecutive Legion World Series, the hard-hitting catcher remembered his team’s 0-3 effort at Las Vegas in 1998, the one-run semi-final loss in Connecticut in 1999, followed

by last year’s one-run defeat in the semis at Alton, Ill. Rucci, whose ground-out ended the 2000 season one game short, wanted another chance in his final season of Legion eligibility. He and his teammates got it. “They really put their noses to the grindstone,” Coach Dennis Barth said. “Our kids worked hard all year.”

Before a final-game crowd of 2,688 spectators at Parker Field, Lewiston jumped out to a 2-0 lead with four doubles in the bottom of the third inning. But Brooklawn retaliated in the fourth when third-baseman Nate Schill scored on a fielder’s choice, and right-fielder Bryan Cicone came in on an error to make it 2-2.

Six-foot-5 right-hander Andrew Noe resumed his composure after the third-inning barrage and held Lewiston scoreless the rest of the

way. In the sixth inning, as Noe and Lewiston starter Julius Smith continued their duel, Rucci stepped up to the plate with one man on and took two straight strikes. The third pitch also was in the strike zone. And then it was gone, launched high over the left-field fence.

The two-run shot made it 4-2. The pitching duel continued – 10 strikeouts for Noe, six for Smith – and Rucci’s home run grew more decisive. Brooklawn added an insurance run in the top of the ninth on an RBI single by left-fielder Mike Falasca, and the three runs might as well have been 10. Noe coolly retired the side to end it.

And then he was swarmed upon. In the chaos of celebration that followed the final out, the players all realized that something very rare and special had just occurred, a moment to be cherished for the rest of their lives. More than that, they will remember forever that it was by never giving up that they became the 2001 American Legion World Series champions.

“This bunch of guys is unbelievable,” said Rucci, his voice hoarse, his face streaked with tears and sweat after the game. With a .410 postseason batting average and relentless work behind the plate, he was named the 2001 ALWS Most Valuable Player, and then credited it all to teammates who believed in themselves. “All along, if one of the big hitters at the top of the order couldn’t get it done, others did. Great guys, one through nine. We definitely had the confidence. We knew we could do it.” □

Jeff Stoffer is managing editor of *The American Legion Magazine*.

Article design: Holly K. Soria



Brooklawn catcher Mike Rucci happily plants his foot on the plate after his decisive sixth-inning home run in the championship game at Yakima, Wash. Jeff Stoffer

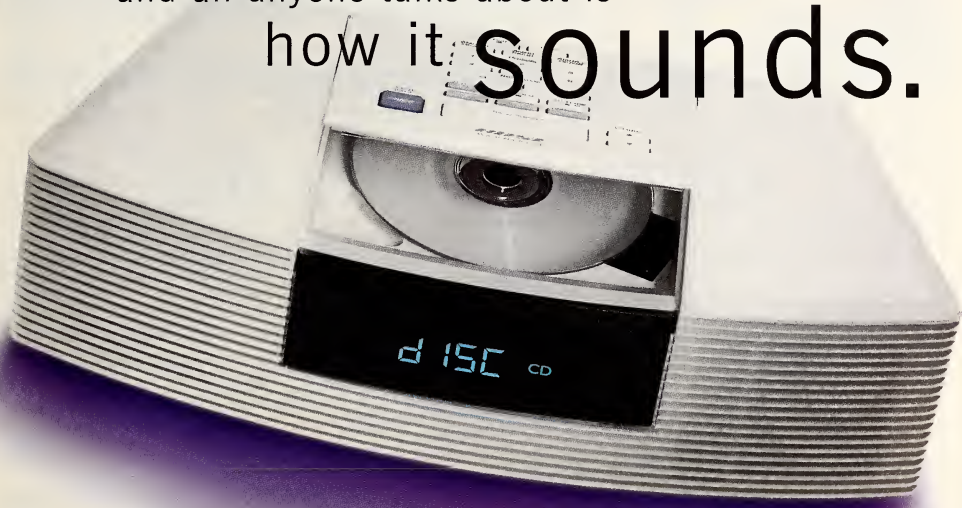
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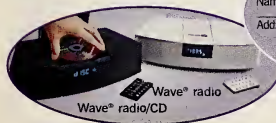
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'The U.S. Marine Corps changed my life'

BY JAMES V. CARROLL

Zell Miller was in trouble. Drunk as he was, he knew it. For the first time in his life, the 21-year-old thought he understood what his mother, Birdie Bryan Miller, meant when she would tell him, "Take what you want. Take it and pay for it."

Miller was paying for it, all right. He was paying for his rotgut-moonshine-drinking spree with a splitting headache and sickening hangover. He was paying for sideswiping a car and careening into a nearby ditch. He was paying for it all with a night behind bars in the Gilmer County Jail in Ellijay, Ga.

He had an overwhelming feeling that he had let everyone down. He had let his mama down, and he had let down all the people in his mountain hometown of Young Harris, Ga. He was overcome with self-pity and shame. He knew he had to do something to turn his life around.

Today, the junior senator from

Georgia points to that hot August night in 1953 as an epiphany. He knew he needed help, so he turned to the United States Marine Corps.

In his 1996 book "Corps Values: Everything You Need To Know I Learned in the Marines," Miller said he needed more than the tender mercies of his local church, more even than a strong mother and loving friends. He decided to "cure or kill" himself by signing up for a three-year enlistment in the Corps.

Miller remains an unabashed spokesman for his beloved Marines 45 years after his honorable discharge. The Marines instilled in him a set of core values, he says, one that has guided him through the daily rigors of public and private life. Much of what he is today he attributes to those three years.

"Everything that has happened to me since that fateful night in the mountains of Georgia is a direct or indirect result of my decision to join the Marines," Miller says. "The Marines taught me neatness, responsibility, persis-

Zell Miller's 42-year political career has carried him from the mayor's office in rural Young Harris, Ga., in 1959, to the U.S. Senate in 2000. Sandy Schaeffer

tence, discipline, shame, brotherhood, courage, achievement, punctuality, respect, pride and loyalty."

His service in the Marine Corps also provided Miller an opportunity to continue his education.

"I would have never been able to go to college were it not for the U.S. Marines. I did go to this little junior college in my hometown, but when I finished there I didn't have the resources to go anywhere else," Miller says. "But I came out of the Marine Corps with the GI Bill and went on to finish my undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Georgia. I gave something to my country and my country gave something back to me."

Not a day goes by, Miller says, that he's not called upon to draw on lessons learned during his weeks in boot camp at Parris Island. He is

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*"I don't know
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— Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga.

particularly attuned to persistence. It is the value Miller ranks first among those he learned in boot camp. He credits dogged persistence, more than any other trait, with any success that has come his way. Take politics, as an example.

"I got elected governor of Georgia, not because I was the richest or smartest or best-looking or the best speaker or any of those things," Miller says. "I got elected governor of Georgia — and a United States senator, for that matter — very simply because I just wouldn't go away. I wouldn't give up."

Miller began his career in public service in 1959 with a term as mayor of Young Harris. In 1960, at age 28, he was elected to the Georgia Senate. In 1974, he won the first of four consecutive terms as lieutenant governor. In 1990, Miller ran for governor and won the first of two terms he would serve as the state's top leader. He retired in 1999.

His retirement from public service was cut short 18 months later when Gov. Roy Barnes asked Miller to accept an appointment to the U.S. Senate after the death of Sen. Paul Coverdale. Miller accepted, and later that year won a seven-candidate race, with 58 percent of the vote, to serve the remaining four years of Coverdale's term.

Miller's resolve was tested more than once during his 40-year political sojourn from Young Harris to Capitol Hill. In 1964 and 1966 he failed to win a seat in the U.S. House. He also was unsuccessful in a 1980 effort to win a seat in the U.S. Senate. But he did not give up. He turned to that dog-eared page of Marine Corps recollections titled "Persistence."

Miller recalls reading about Winston Churchill and a particular report card he received during his prep school days. The teacher had written that young Churchill "shows a conspicuous lack of success." Later, Prime Minister Churchill was invited back to the same school to give a commencement speech. Churchill got up, went to the rostrum and simply said, "Never give up. Never give up. Never give up."

"I've always thought it was the best commencement speech I've ever read," Miller says.

Miller was comfortable during his short political respite. But duty called and he answered. It was a

matter of responsibility, he says. Another lesson learned in the Corps.

"I saw it as part of my duty. If I had been governor and I chose somebody that I wanted to fill Sen. Coverdale's Senate seat, I would hope that person would respect me enough to go and report for duty," Miller says. "I had never been happier than those 18 months between being governor and being appointed to the Senate, but I kind of saw it as reporting for duty."

Shame is another Marine Corps lesson learned well by Miller. It is the key to a more civil society, he says. Humiliation is a strong motivator.

"I'm convinced that shame works. It's not politically correct today, but it works. A person who doesn't have shame doesn't have a lot of other things either. If a person can't be ashamed of himself, there's something missing there."

Miller says he has often been the target of permissive sociologists who argue that using shame or embarrassment as a disciplinary tool does more harm than good. He doesn't buy the argument.

"I heard about it when I ordered the photographs of deadbeat fathers on wanted posters, but it worked. Georgia is now one of the leading states in collecting child support from absent fathers," Miller says. "It also worked when I was successful in getting a law to put photographs of three-time DUI offenders in their local newspapers."

The Marine Corps' insistent use of shame as a force to modify behavior is sound, says Miller.

"I want to see a society in which inspiration to succeed and determination to avoid the humiliation of failure are equal incentives in inspiring all children to grow up to be all they can be," Miller says.

Miller credits his mother and his maiden aunt, Verdine Miller, in

forming his childhood character traits: honesty, respect and discipline. He credits the Marine Corps for the core beliefs he embraces as an adult. But it is Edna Herren, his high school teacher, who is responsible for Miller's curiosity and quest for greater experiences.

"She saw something in me nobody else saw. She pushed me to be on the debate team. She was the one over the years who encouraged me to broaden my horizons," Miller recalls. "After I moved to Atlanta, she sent me a season ticket to the Atlanta Symphony. I had to write to her after each performance to tell her what I thought about what I heard. Up until that time I had never cared about anything except baseball — not even girls, much. She also taught me how beautiful the written word is and how you can use it to tell stories and create emotion."

As beautiful as the written word might be, Miller continues to love baseball. As a child, he was a New York Yankees fan.

"I was one of the few Yankees fans who lived in the South. I was a Yankees fan because I admired Lou Gehrig and saw the movie 'Pride of the Yankees' 14 times," Miller says.

When Mickey Mantle came along, that was something special to Miller. Little did he know back then that they'd someday be friends.

"It was very special — something I never dreamed would happen. Mickey had always been my idol," Miller says. "It was fate, I guess, that we hooked up together. We used to talk about it. Here we were just two small-town boys who had some success."

It's unlikely Mantle would have become a friend had Miller not been Georgia's governor. But he might not have become governor without the strong sense of values drawn from the North Georgia mountains, his mother's teachings and the U.S. Marine Corps, Miller says.

"I don't know what might have become of me had I not turned to the Marine Corps in my darkest hour of need," Miller confides. "But I do know what has become of me as a result of my choice that night nearly 50 years ago." □

James V. Carroll is an assistant editor at *The American Legion Magazine*.

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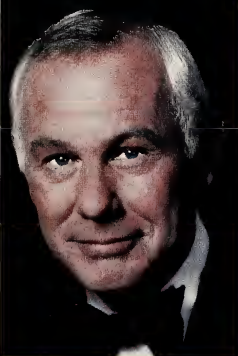
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MEN *of* HONOR

Paying final respects to a parting comrade is the toughest duty a veteran faces.

BY LARRY BINGHAM

So this is how a war ends. The honor guard of The American Legion Mason-Dixon Post, No. 194, last year buried 95 veterans, most of them survivors of World War II.

The year before that, 105.

By Memorial Day this year: 36.

That's nearly two funerals a week for the honor guard in the town of Rising Sun, Md.

So this is how a war ends.

On the final front, injuries come from age. The wounded wear hearing aids and can't see without their glasses. On this battlefield, a winter wind can threaten an old soldier's life.

Some 572,000 veterans are expected to die this year nationwide, so many that Congress has passed a law appointing two servicemen to perform graveside military honors. But in this town near the Pennsylvania border, other veterans do the honors.

Because in their minds, two men is not honor enough.

The military is downsizing. Bases are closing. Younger men aren't joining veteran groups. And all the while, World War II veterans are slipping away – an average of 1,100 a day.

Imagine what kind of man will be lost when the last World War II veteran is gone. Think not only of all he saw, but of the clarity he brought to the battlefield, and the burden he carried away.

Imagine what life means to him now. Or death, for that matter. Or time.

Here, ask this tall, broad-shouldered fellow in the front seat of a Crown Victoria, his arm thrown over the back of the seat like he's out for a Sunday drive instead of on his way to a funeral.

Charles "Chik" Smith is the honor guard chaplain. He's like Walter Matthau, the ornery one who calls himself "a sentimental old bastard." At 20, he invaded Italy on a bloody beach south of Salerno, dodging German bullets that whizzed by like darting birds. At 78, he hasn't missed a funeral in two years.

Like all the veterans in this procession, Chik has reasons for going to the cemetery.

Here, ask this man sitting in the back seat of a Cadillac.

This is Billy Davis, who at 81 is the third-oldest man in the honor guard. Billy's from Kentucky. He says things like "by gosh" and "back home." Billy survived a torpedoed aircraft carrier in the Battle of the Coral Sea and lived for a half century more. He was diagnosed with stomach cancer in the early 1990s and has lived for a decade more.

Imagine what time means to him.

Or ask this man sitting beside Billy.

Francis Auvan Smith is an 87-year-old war veteran, hero of the 1939 town baseball team, the man they call Little Smitty. He



Honor Guard Chaplain Chik Smith watches for the funeral procession while waiting in the chapel of the Delaware Veterans Cemetery. Smith attended all of the funerals that the guard worked last year. *Jerry Jackson/Baltimore Sun*

has just become the oldest member in the honor guard, so look at him closely. Note the way he laughs with his shoulders; the way he walks on shuffling feet; the glint in his one good eye.

Commit him to memory because the day will come, and soon, when Staff Sgt. Smith disappears from these ranks.

This is how a war ends.

With a procession of old men in Cadillacs and Crown Victorias leaving the funeral home, idling at the only stoplight in town.

The casualties mount, and the living take one step closer to the grave.

It is only a matter of time.

Imagine what kind of man will be lost when the last World War II veteran is gone. Think not only of all he saw, but of the clarity he brought to the battlefield, and the burden he carried away.



postponed until spring. But “no siree Bob,” says 81-year-old Raymond Jones. “There are too many to do that now.”

At the cemetery, they park where they always do: near the road, so they can be first to leave.

A few sit in their cars while the younger men, Korea and Vietnam veterans, gather the ceremonial flags and rifles from the guard commander’s truck.

It is cold and foggy, and no man is in a hurry to get to the grave.

To bury one of their own, the commander jabs an M-1 rifle into the mud, then sets a helmet atop the gun. It is a symbol from the battlefield: Soldiers marked the place where their comrades were killed. Now it is a rare honor reserved for post commanders – or brothers in the guard.

To bury one of their own, they stood in pairs at the funeral home, at the head and foot of the casket, for 15 minutes without talking or moving, each holding a 10-pound M-1 rifle. “Standing watch,” as it is called, is hard on arthritic legs, replaced knees and degenerative hips. Harder yet on an old man’s heart.

Walking through the mud toward the funeral tent, Raymond stops to point out the grave that awaits him. Then he turns and points in another direction, past Little Smitty and the other guard members who stand in small groups of conversation. He points to a distant column of cedars, to “Pauper’s Row,” where veterans without money are buried.

He points again, this time to West Nottingham Academy, where Little Smitty went to school and coached baseball.

Every man in the honor guard has heard Little Smitty’s stories.

“Oh, God yeah,” Raymond says.

Especially the story of one game.

“By gosh, he was a cracker,” says Billy Davis. “You get that

guy talkin’ about baseball, and you’ll never shut him up.”

To pass the time until the hearse arrives, the men talk.

The commander, a Korean War-era veteran named Riley Bennett, asks: “Raymond, what was that story he told about pitching so damn long?”

Raymond says: “I don’t know how many innings it was. Damn near pitched ‘til dark, didn’t he?”

It was July 15, 1939, years before Smitty was drafted. He was 26 and a pitcher for the Calvert town team in Cecil County.

His opponent that Saturday afternoon was “Dutch” Smith, a 6-foot-2, 240-pound southpaw from the nearby town of Bayview. By all accounts, big Dutch was the superior pitcher, but after nine innings, the score remained 0-0.

Farmers left to do their evening milking and came back when they heard the game still wasn’t over. Spectators who had gone into Rising Sun for dinner spread the word, and a crowd gathered under the trees down the right-field line.

After 18 innings, the score remained 0-0.

Finally, in the bottom of the 23rd inning, the Calvert shortstop hit a grounder and worked his way around the bases. He was on third when a batter hit a sacrifice fly to center field.

The game would become Smitty’s most legendary battle, but he would never take credit for what happened that day.

The runner barely beat the ball across home plate, the umpire called him safe and Smitty won, 1-0.

For the rest of his life, though, Smitty would say it was the other men who kept him in the game.

The men are still waiting for the hearse when the commander says, “Well, Raymond, looks like we got ‘em all here today.”

Raymond says, “Riley, I’ve never seen that before. Never in

The time is 2 p.m., Jan. 15.

When the light changes, the men turn onto Main Street and don’t say much.

Their journey takes them past the police station, the National Bank of Rising Sun, the doughnut shop, the pet store, the insurance agent, the diner, the Western Auto where lawnmowers are set on the sidewalk when the weather is nice.

On this winter day, they bury a founding member, Charlie Earl Owen, a World War II veteran who was just five months older than Little Smitty.

They are in the country when they drive by Owen’s house; passing empty fields, gray barns, silver silos, frozen ponds, flocks of Canada geese on their own journey.

Another WWII veteran, a fellow who survived in the hedgerows of Britain, says he can remember when funerals in northern Maryland were

*Burying the dead, a
man learns a few
things about the living.*

my whole life."

All 25 members of the honor guard present.

"It just goes to show how much they thought of him," Riley says.

Then they hear the wheels on the wet pavement, crunching gravel, splashing mud. The hearse appears: dark and sleek, its headlights cutting through the fog the way a boat sails through water.

"Here we go," someone says.

"Here we go."

The men hobble into place. The chaplain flicks an unfinished Camel into the mud, the commander barks an order, Little Smitty stands at attention in the firing squad.

Six pallbearers open the back door of the hearse to bring out the casket, draped in the blood-red stripes of the flag.

Slowly through the mud, they carry their old friend. Past the bugler, past the Navy flag, past the lonely rifle and empty helmet.

Their friend was a Navy cook on the trains that carried troops from Maryland to California, and though he never saw combat, he spent 53 years after the war in the honor guard, burying veterans.

Mourners part as his widow passes. Slowly the crowd follows her into the tent, where the chaplain is reading "A Prayer to a Departed Comrade."

"Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far-flung battle line, to whom the ranks of life report, we bow before you with reverent hearts and in sublime faith, knowing that you lead us on in death as you have in life."

His voice is phlegmy and gruff.

"For again you have ordered a veteran to that realm in the West, beyond the twilight and the evening star, where beauty and valor and goodness dwell forever with the unnumbered multitude."

Chik Smith is not a religious man. He became the honor guard chaplain 12 years ago because somebody had to do it; the other chaplain had died.

It was fitting. For most of his life, death went first, and Chik came two steps behind.

Not long after he enlisted in 1942, when he was whisked from a foundry town in Pennsylvania to an Army base in Texas, a telegram arrived, saying his

mother was dying.

Chik begged to go see her, but his captain said no.

By the time Pfc. Smith could go home – before his deployment to fight the Germans – his mother was gone. He could only visit her grave in the cemetery.

He believes he's here at this funeral because of the coward who captained the transport boat that carried Chik's unit to shore near Parmum. The captain feigned engine trouble and turned around as the assault began. The ploy bought them time, and Chik landed in the fourth wave of the invasion, passing the floating bodies of the men who'd gone first.

Today's funeral is his 824th.

"I present to you, on behalf of the United States of America, the flag under which your loved one served."

The words still bring a lump to his throat. It is a hard lump to swallow when you bury one of your own.

Burying the dead, a man learns a few things about the living.

For one, most people bury their loved ones around lunchtime.

For another, even if the obituary says no flowers, people send flowers.

A young minister seizes the captive audience to preach of missed opportunities, pending judgment, fiery eternities. A wise pastor goes a more comforting route: "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," "In my Father's house are many mansions," "He leadeeth me beside the still waters, He restoreth my soul."

A savvy undertaker wears duck boots on a muddy day.

A thoughtful gravedigger hides his backhoe behind a tree.

A bored man acts like a boy.

During the course of every funeral, without fail, somebody in the honor guard calls somebody else a name: Lobster Louie, Skull Tony, Pop-Pop, the Sex Maniac, the Polish Prince, the Mayor of Farmington, Madame Butterfly, Liquid Viagra.

The name-calling usually comes before the hearse arrives, during the wait.

To pass the time, the men talk about their children, their grandchildren, their former occupations, favorite ball teams, politicians, health problems and the weather.

How cold it is. How hot it was. How deep the snow, thick the fog, hard the rain. How the weather at this funeral differs from the last.

Another thing a man learns going to funerals: A survivor's debt is never entirely paid.

The service ends after the 21-gun salute. When a thin gray blanket of smoke hovers over the cemetery, the bugler plays. The weeping mourners stop and look up. The sound of passing trucks and honking geese is drowned out by the 24 notes.

Imagine how it feels to be those old veterans. To pick up their spent shells, to hear "Taps" playing in their heads.

Ask Billy Davis. Billy fled the coalfields of eastern Kentucky before the war and joined the Navy, even though he didn't know how to swim.

On May 8, 1942, a few days after his 21st birthday, Fireman 1st Class Davis was in the engine room of the aircraft carrier USS *Lexington* when he felt the tremors of Japanese torpedoes striking the ship's hull.

Locked down in the dark engine room for seven hours, Billy could hear ammunition exploding. When the captain finally gave the order to abandon ship, it was listing so badly that climbing topside was like climbing a hill. On the deck, Billy found chaos and catastrophe: Men badly burned, men being tossed overboard in body bags.

With the sound of a bugler playing "Taps," Billy followed orders and walked off the ship, falling 40 feet into the sea.

Years later, Billy plays "Taps." He stands behind the tent and presses the play button on the "jukebox," his name for the CD player.

Sometimes, the notes bring back the faces of those burned men. "As black," Billy says, "as the ace of spades."

Sometimes, Billy cries.

He shouldn't be here.

The North East River, behind the St. Mary Anne's Episcopal Cemetery in the town of North

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Jerry Jackson/Baltimore Sun

East, is frozen. The wind is coming off the ice, climbing over the riverbank onto the battlefield, relentlessly coming for him.

He's standing against an old stone building, shivering.

Billy stands beside him.

"When you get to be 80 years old, you can't take the cold," Billy says. "Your blood gets cold."

The Korea and Vietnam veterans tell the older men to go back to the cars.

"Go warm up."

"Look at you. You're freezing."

They point to Kitty Bennett, the commander's wife who carries the flag in the color guard. She has gone back to the truck.

They point to Raymond Jones, the 81-year-old who survived the cold, damp hedgerows of Britain – he's in his truck.

Little Smitty won't listen. He says he's fine. He insists on staying in the cemetery, in the game until the end.

When Smitty was drafted he was placed on limited service because he'd been born with a lazy eye. Nonetheless, he was told twice he was heading overseas. But those orders never came, and Smitty never left the safety of the States.

When 41 veterans met on March 6, 1946, to create an American Legion Post in Rising Sun, Smitty was there.

When the post formed an honor guard in April of 1947 to bury a World War II veteran, Smitty was there.

He went to funerals after he married Anna Mary, after he

Imagine how the commander felt when he stuck that rifle into the muddy ground at Owen's funeral.

Imagine how the others felt when they saw the empty helmet.

Imagine what it was like to walk past that rifle carrying the body of a friend.

moved to Elkton, after he took a job at the Aberdeen Proving Ground. He went to funerals after the Legion team he coached won the state championship, after they won 49 consecutive games, after two of his boys went on to play major league baseball.

Nothing stopped him.

Not a tornado one year or a hurricane another. Not the chaplain almost falling in the hole. Not the guard showing up at the wrong cemetery. Not the bugler playing reveille instead of "Taps".

It never mattered that Little Smitty never saw combat. It only mattered that other men did.

But time is his enemy now, and all winter the other men have watched his health slide. In the cold, his hands turn white and his face pale. This is not the first time the wind has made him shiver.

He hasn't been the same since he went to a ball game and suffered a stroke on the way home.

It could have killed him if his wife hadn't found him at the back door, if she hadn't been a nurse and recognized the reason he was babbling, if they hadn't lived so close to the hospital.

Little Smitty came back to the honor guard with a plastic shunt in his head and most of his memory lost somewhere on that ride home.

He surprised the younger veterans when he regained the use of one arm, then the other, when he could still fire the rifle in the 21-gun salute.

But since Owen's funeral, he has seemed to be slipping away.

Two Korea-era veterans have to hold his hands to help him across the street. Another man, a Vietnam veteran, closes the car door gently behind him. He can't stop shivering in the cold.

The commander makes the decision to stop calling.

There are more funerals, more veterans dying, but at Smitty's house, the telephone doesn't ring.

His wife doesn't write the details on her calendar beside the fridge, and he doesn't polish his shoes or dress early or wait by the door for the Korea-era veteran who gives him a ride.

Imagine how the commander felt when he stuck that rifle into the muddy ground at Owen's funeral.

Imagine how the others felt when they saw the empty helmet.

Imagine what it was like to walk past that rifle carrying the body of a friend.

The honor guard had to do it once this year. They don't want to do it again.

In the spring they will call Little Smitty. A new baseball season will have started, and what a difference that will make.

Just imagine.

A procession will drive through town on its way to the cemetery. Past the liquor store, the restaurant, the grocery store, the car wash, the ice cream parlor, the baseball diamond behind the Catholic church.

See the old men looking out their car windows. Watch them turn to the action on the field.

They know winning is not what's important. Only the other players matter. Only the game. □

Editor's Note – This article originally appeared in the May 27, 2001 edition of The Baltimore Sun.

Larry Bingham writes for The Baltimore Sun. © 2001, The Baltimore Sun

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Duty · Honor · Courage

From these virtues are forged A Few Good Men

What does it take to be one of the proud few to wear the uniform of the United States Marine Corps? The answer may be found in three virtues—duty, honor, courage—that mean as much to Marines today as they did to their brothers fighting in Tripoli or Guadalcanal or Hue City. Armed with a faithfulness to Country and Corps, brave Marines of every age have done the impossible.

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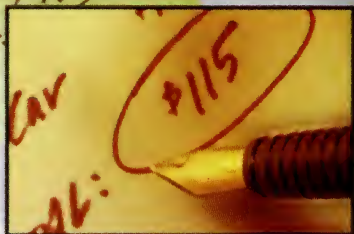
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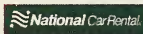
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Color your diet healthy

BY TARA PARKER-POPE

What does the color of your food say about your health?

If you're like most Americans, your plate is filled with beige, brown and white foods such as meat, potatoes and breads. The lack of color on your plate is more than an aesthetic problem – it means you are missing out on crucial nutrients and foods that can keep you healthy, battle cancer and extend your life.

"If your diet is beige and brown, you're in deep trouble," says David Heber, director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition and author of the book "What Color is Your Diet?" Heber's mission is to get more people to color-code their eating plans, filling their plates with orange, yellow, green, red and purple foods. The natural result of colorizing your diet will be to consume more fruits and vegetables. "The three vegetables most Americans eat are iceberg lettuce, potatoes and ketchup," Heber says.

At a time when many popular diets require complicated calorie or carbohydrate counting, high protein intake or complex food combinations, color-coding is a deceptively simple way to improve eating habits. And there's growing evidence that colorful fruits and vegetables contain nutrients that protect your heart, prevent age-related blindness, boost your immune system, reduce inflammation and help fight cancer.

The National Cancer Institute



suggests that everyone eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, but only 32 percent of adults meet that goal. That means nearly two-thirds of the adult population ignores the fact that fruits and vegetables are proven to lower the risk of cancer. In countries where people eat a pound of fruits and vegetables a day, the risk of common forms of cancer is 50 percent lower.

And virtually every disease of aging, such as heart disease, diabetes and prostate cancer, results from damage created during normal cell processes – damage that can be prevented by substances found in fruits and vegetables.

Red foods, such as tomato juice and sauce and raw tomatoes, contain lycopene, a nutrient that is concentrated in the prostate gland. A Harvard study found that five servings a week of tomato products

was associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer. Cooking actually helps release the lycopene, so cooked and stewed tomatoes and sauces are best. Even so, a single glass of tomato juice every day raised the lycopene in the blood stream by 43 percent in prostate cancer patients, according to one study.

Green foods, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts and kale, contain sulforaphane, isothiocyanate and indoles, which spur the liver to produce enzymes that eliminate carcinogens and pesticides from the body.

Green-yellow foods include spinach, avocado, corn, peas and honeydew melon. Those foods contain lutein and zeaxanthin, substances that concentrate in the eye and improve optical health. Lower intakes have been linked with age-related blindness and cataracts.

Orange foods include carrots, butternut squash and pumpkin, and they all contain alpha- and beta-carotene. For years, people have taken beta-carotene supplements, but research now suggests that you need both alpha- and beta-carotene to reap the benefits. The nutrients can help improve night vision and also are believed to be cancer fighters.

Red-purple foods include red wine, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries. They contain the powerful anti-oxidants called anthocyanins which attack renegade particles in the body that can eventually cause cancer or other health

→see *healthy*, page 54

TRICARE Plus adds enrollment option for MHS users

A new TRICARE enrollment option called TRICARE Plus allows some Military Health System beneficiaries to enroll with a military primary-care provider. Enrollees will be provided access to primary care on the same basis as beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Prime. There is no annual enrollment fee.

Beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Plus will be identified in

the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System and will use the military treatment facility as their source of primary care.

TRICARE Plus is not a comprehensive health plan. It does not lock beneficiaries into "managed care." It does not guarantee access to specialty providers at military treatment facilities. Availability is based on enrollment capacity at

individual military treatment facilities. Beneficiaries with existing primary-care relationships at participating military treatment facilities will have the first opportunity to enroll. If capacity is no longer available, eligibility may be revoked. In any case, TRICARE or Medicaid benefits will not be affected.

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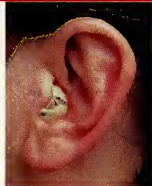


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VA clears Type 2 diabetes for disability compensation

Vietnam veterans with "Type 2" diabetes may apply for disability compensation from VA after new rules published this year in the Federal Register. "The hazards of the battlefield include more than bullets and shells," VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi said in announcing the new benefits program. "As our understanding of the health risks faced by our military personnel increases, VA will adjust its programs and benefits to fit the needs of veterans."

Veterans affected by the new rules will receive a priority for VA health care, and, depending upon the severity of their illnesses, disability compensation that ranges from \$101 to \$2,107 monthly.

The announcement follows a report last year by the National Academy of Sciences' prestigious Institute of Medicine that found "limited/suggestive" evidence of a link between adult-onset, or Type 2, diabetes, and Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam.

VA estimates that about 9 percent of 2.3 million Vietnam veter-

ans have Type 2 diabetes. High blood-sugar levels caused by the body's inability to process the hormone insulin characterize the illness. Approximately 16 percent of

veterans currently receiving care in VA medical facilities have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Cost of the new benefit during the next five years is projected to be \$3.3 billion, with about 220,000 veterans receiving benefits, VA says.

Vietnam veterans suffering from Type 2 diabetes are encouraged to file a disability claim with their local VA Regional Office by calling (800) 827-1000.

Professional American Legion service officers also are available to assist veterans with the VA claims process as well as other VA-related matters. This service is provided free of charge and is not dependent on membership status. To locate an American Legion service officer in your state, call (800) 433-3318 or consult the service officer directory under Veterans Issues on the Legion Web site, www.legion.org.



"The hazards of the battlefield include more than bullets and shells."

— Anthony J. Principi
VA Secretary

Emergency care benefit expands

The Department of Veterans Affairs can now reimburse non-VA hospitals for emergency care to eligible veterans who have no other means of payment. The emergency-care benefit does not apply to all veterans. To qualify, veterans must be enrolled in VA health care, have been seen by a VA health-care professional within 24 months and carry no other form of health insurance, including Medicare or Medicaid. If any third party pays all or part of the bill, VA cannot provide reimbursement.

The benefit is a safety net for

enrolled veterans who have no other means to pay for emergency medical treatment and is only for emergency treatment. Veterans should keep their insurance, VA said. Spouses generally do not qualify for VA health care and could be left uninsured. If a veteran is covered by Medicare Part B and decides to cancel it, it cannot be reinstated until January of next year.

For more information about emergency-care benefits contact the nearest VA health-care facility or call (877) 222-8387.

[**healthy**] problems. The compounds also may help heart disease by inhibiting blood-clot formation. In animal studies, blueberries have been shown to slow degenerative brain disease.

Orange-yellow foods, such as oranges, lemons, grapefruits and other citrus fruits, contain vitamin C, an antioxidant which many researchers believe can help stave off cancer. Heber says the skin of lemons and oranges contain compounds that have been shown to actually kill cancer cells. He suggests you regularly add zest of lemon or orange to drinks.

White-green foods, such as garlic, onions and chives contain alliin, the compound that gives the vegetables their strong smell. The compound was used as an antibiotic during World War II and also can kill cancer cells.

Adding color doesn't mean giving up all the foods you love. You still need some white and beige foods, such as high-fiber grains and low-fat proteins, such as white meat, white fish and soy products.

The bottom line: don't think about counting calories or fat or protein. Think simply about adding color, and a healthful diet will follow. "You put the whole food in, and you get the benefits," Heber says. "If you add in fruits and vegetables, you push out something else."

Tara Parker-Pope writes a weekly health column for The Wall Street Journal and is author of "Cigarettes: Anatomy of an Industry from Seed to Smoke."

Living Well is a section designed to provide general information to our readers. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their personal physicians when they have health problems.

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Spinal cord injury affects more than mobility

VA scientists work to restore hope for Americans who suffer from SCI

BY DR. JOHN R. FEUSSNER

More than one-fourth of the 200,000 Americans living with spinal cord injury are military veterans. Treating and caring for these veterans is among the highest priorities of the VA health-care system.

SCI is a chronic condition that greatly affects all aspects of an individual's life. The impact is evident in terms of functional independence, quality of life and overall health status.

Until recently, care for persons with SCI focused on providing state-of-the-art technologies to assist with the activities of daily life. The VA research portfolio now encompasses restorative therapies, treatment of secondary complications and development of assistive technologies.

Impact of SCI. Spinal cord injury is usually the result of a traumatic event, such as an accident that abruptly leads to devastating neurologic impairment and affects an individual's ability to move, feel, control bowel and bladder function, regulate body temperature and control blood pressure. Such basic functions, normally taken for granted, require assistance and may take hours to accomplish.

Medical complications include bone density loss, insufficient heart and lung function, depression, bedsores, urinary tract infections, muscle spasticity and pain. These complications may occur even with incomplete spinal cord injury, in which some muscle control is restored. Additionally, individuals with SCI may not be able to return to work, may suffer social isolation and family dysfunction, and may experience diminished ability to engage in sexual activity.

Physicians and other health-care providers must address these concerns as a whole to return an individual to the highest possible function after SCI. Traditionally, rehabilitation clinicians taught methods



"The whole VA system today is a model for what research can and must be."

— Christopher Reeve,
actor and director

of compensating for injury, along with basic health precautions, and encouraged counseling and support groups. They emphasized building upper-body strength and heavy investment in wheelchair design and other assistive technologies.

Search For a Cure. As recently as a decade ago, few scientists believed a cure could be found for SCI. Today, few do not believe a cure is possible. We have learned a great deal about the mechanisms of injury, and studies show the central nervous system has more ability to reorganize itself than once thought.

The search for a cure means rehabilitation has an expanding and evolving role in caring for persons with SCI. For instance, nerve connections may develop more readily when movement is stimulated and muscles are pushed to activate beyond their apparent limit. An exam-

ple of this is treadmill training, in which an individual is suspended above a moving treadmill while physical therapists move his legs to simulate stepping. Definitive clinical trials are needed, but this technique appears to lead to recovery of function in persons with incomplete SCI. In the short term, the technique increases bone density and improves heart and lung function.

VA Research Initiatives. Five of 12 VA rehabilitation research and development centers are focused on problems related to SCI. In Pittsburgh, researchers study wheelchair design and training mechanisms aimed at reducing repetitive strain injuries. The Cleveland VA Medical Center leads the nation in using artificial nerve systems to help restore lost function. A newly funded center at the Bronx is emphasizing prevention and treatment of medical complications of SCI, such as kidney infections and pressure ulcers. Researchers at the center in Miami are focusing on spasticity, pain management and recovery of motor and sensory function. Scientists in West Haven, Conn., are exploring ways to restore lost function. Together, these centers form a powerful consortium with a comprehensive approach to improve how we view and treat SCI.

In addition to the centers, VA researchers across the nation are studying areas such as vocational rehabilitation, stress management, treadmill training and telemedicine. In partnership with the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, VA research also is supporting new scientists through fellowships and pilot studies.

As we increase our knowledge, new possibilities for people with SCI stretch our imaginations. VA is bringing together its best minds to extend traditional boundaries of care and make a difference in the lives of veterans.

John R. Feussner, M.D., M.P.H., is chief research and development officer of the Veterans Health Administration.

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Patents pending

Lost and found?

The U.S. Air Force and a group of retired military and intelligence officials are at odds over what to do with a nuclear bomb buried for 43 years somewhere near Savannah, Ga. Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., said he agrees with the Air Force, which recommends leaving it alone. The American Sea Shore Underwater Recovery Expedition (ASSURE) wants to find and possibly retrieve it.

The Mark 15 weapon, which may or may not be armed with a plutonium capsule or trigger, has about 100 times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb. It was jettisoned from a bomber that was struck by another aircraft at 36,000 feet during a training exercise off the Georgia coast in 1958. A 10-week search at the time failed to find it.

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Derek Duke, president of ASSURE, is critical of the Air Force position. "They said the weapon wasn't worth looking for because it did not contain a nuclear capsule. On the other hand, they said it was so dangerous that any search may cause more harm than good. Our response to that is you can't have it both ways."

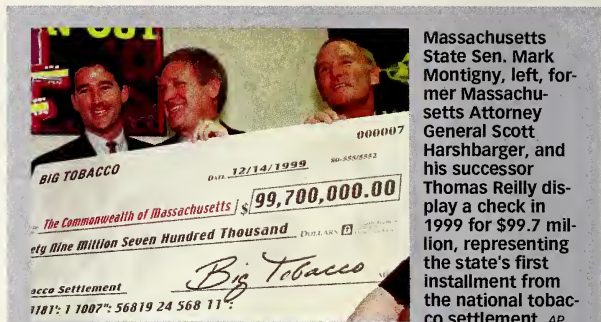
Another official of ASSURE, retired CIA officer Bert Soleau, said the bomb should be recovered "to preclude the possibility of a terrorist group gaining access to any nuclear materials."

Partying with Castro

The Treasury Department is investigating the media's love affair with communist dictator Fidel Castro. CBS President and CEO Leslie Moonves, MTV chief executive Tom Freston, William Morris talent agent Jim Wiatt, *Vanity Fair* magazine editor Graydon Carter and HBO producer Brad Grey traveled to Havana for a private dinner with Castro.

"None of us had ever been to Cuba before," one said. "We went to the beach. We went to a lot of jazz clubs. And we drank a lot of white rum ... Cuba is the most romantic, soulful and sexy country I've ever been to in my life."

Travel to Cuba is restricted, so the Castro regime, under a general U.S. economic embargo, can't benefit from tourist dollars. While jour-



Massachusetts State Sen. Mark Montigny, left, former Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger, and his successor Thomas Reilly display a check in 1999 for \$99.7 million, representing the state's first installment from the national tobacco settlement. AP

Tobacco settlement monies up in smoke

Money from the tobacco settlement was supposed to go to anti-smoking campaigns. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that states spend at least 20 percent of their payments on smoking prevention to cut future tobacco-related health expenses. But only 5 percent has been spent for that purpose, according to a report from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

"Two years ago, the states attempted to justify their lawsuit by promising that this money would be used to reimburse taxpayers for societal costs related to tobacco use and to discourage future tobacco use,"

noted National Taxpayers Union associate policy analyst Sayeh Daee. "Instead, tobacco companies have been exploited as an easy source of revenue by big-spending politicians eager to fund their pet projects. New college scholarships and grants, flood-control projects, teen-pregnancy programs and remodeled schools may be worthwhile state programs but they are all contrary to the advertised intent of the tobacco settlement. Unfortunately, the taxpayers will be left with programs that must be funded long after the tobacco settlement money has been spent."

— C.K.

nalists may visit the island with a Treasury Department license, the purpose has to be story-related, not just partying. Spokesmen for the entertainment executives said they obtained permission before flying to Cuba and voiced puzzlement over the federal inquiry.

In a victory for Castro, the House of Representatives voted 240-186 in July to lift restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens.

Private vs. public schools

A report concerning math skills from the Education Department's National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that students in the fourth, eighth and 12th grades had higher average scores in 2000 than in 1990, but average scores of 12th-graders declined over the past four years. The report didn't emphasize

that students attending nonpublic schools did significantly better.

Students in the same grades at private schools had significantly higher scores than those in public schools. In 12th grade, for example, public-school students had an average score of 300 out of a possible 500. But students in Catholic nonpublic schools had an average score of 315. In the fourth grade, public-school students scored an average of 226. But students in Catholic, Lutheran or conservative Christian nonpublic schools scored 238, 241 and 235.

One of the most fascinating revelations was that the scores of students who reported heavy television watching were lower than the results of those who watched little or moderate television.

— Cliff Kincaid

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Post captures Christmas spirit

Members of Chapin, Ill., Post 878 are playing Santa Claus again this year to soldiers stationed in South Korea. Last year, the post, with the help of local residents, shipped 220 Christmas boxes to American service members stationed there. They hope to double the number this Christmas.

Legionnaire Don Rigor started the project in 1998 after mailing a holiday care package to his son, who was stationed at Camp Stanley, South Korea, about 20 miles from Camp Casey, where Rigor was stationed in 1966.

"When I was at Camp Casey, I got plenty of packages from home," Rigor said. "But I was about the only one who got anything."

His son was also one of few who received boxes from home. He shared his treats with other service members, but it wasn't enough to go around.

That's when Rigor came up with the idea of sending Christmas goodies to the troops. Camp Stanley's chaplain provided a list of names.

"When I received over 120 names of young people who had little or no contact with family members and could use a pick-me-up, I was overwhelmed," Rigor said. "I was expecting about 40 or 50. I soon learned to have faith in people when it comes to helping a cause."

That year Rigor's post, with the help of the local community, shipped more than 150 boxes. The following year they sent 180 boxes. Last year, 220.

Rigor said he hopes other posts will start similar projects to remember the nation's service members during the holidays.

Soldiers of the 602nd Aviation Support Battalion at Camp Stanley, South Korea, are remembered each Christmas by members of Chapin, Ill., Post 878.

Courtesy 602nd Aviation Support Battalion



Boys Nation bill considered by Congress

A bill before Congress has its roots in American Legion Boys Nation. H.R. 1625 – Samuel Kerner Commission on Youth – proposes the creation of a national youth advisory commission to promote teen involvement in public affairs. The bill was authored in 1999 by Boys Nation delegate Samuel Kerner of Plymouth, Minn.

The bill seeks to reduce apathy among youth by making recommendations on issues affecting teens: education, wages, higher-education financing, drug abuse and violence.

U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad, R-Minn., and President Clinton – who were 1963 Boys Nation delegates – supported Kerner's proposal.

Last year, while a freshman at George Washington University, Kerner met with Ramstad and began working on H.R. 1625. This summer Kerner joined Ramstad for a press conference announcing the bill's introduction.

Kerner is currently chairman of the Plymouth Youth Advisory Commission, which deals with teen issues. "I want to give back to this country," he said. "It's given me so much."

Spirit of the *Tampa* still alive

Eighty-three years have passed since a German U-boat torpedoed and sank the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Tampa* in the Bristol Channel off the coast of Wales, killing all 131 aboard. The most fatal sea attack on a U.S. military vessel during World War I, the destruction on Sept. 26, 1918, was so complete that only two bodies and scant wreckage were recovered after a three-day search.

Purple Hearts were not awarded during World War I. However, in recent years the historical significance of the original *Tampa*

has been recognized and long-overdue Purple Hearts have been presented to descendants of the crew as well as to the *Tampa's* three namesake Legion posts. The cutter also was memorialized with a monument on Coast Guard Hill at Arlington National Cemetery in 1999.

Two American Legion posts in Florida and one in New York are chartered in memory of the cutter or her crew.

New York's Post 719 was chartered in 1919 as the successor organization to the U.S. Coast

Guard Overseas Association. In 1920, USS *Tampa* Post 5, was chartered in Tampa, Fla., in memory of the cutter, and Post 167 was later chartered in the same city to remember crew members who were killed in the attack. Twenty-four of those who died in the attack were from Tampa.

The New York and Florida posts have long continued their respect for the original cutter with anniversary observances and support for the present-day USCGC *Tampa*, a 270-foot vessel stationed out of Portsmouth, Va.

World War I vet seeks Purple Heart

World War I veteran and lifetime member of The American Legion Gustave "Gus" Streeter of Indianapolis celebrated his 105th birthday Sept. 29. His birthday wish – to receive a Purple Heart for wounds he claims to have received while serving in the U.S. Army – had yet to be realized. Streeter served in France as a cannoner with the Army's 89th Division, 340th Field Artillery.

"I'm proud to be an American," said Streeter, a member of Indianapolis' Robert E. Kennington Post 34. "I fought for world peace and unity and was wounded twice in both legs. After 83 years, I still have scars to show for it."

Two years ago, the French government named Streeter a Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honor for his courageous wartime service in France. M. Jean-Rene Gehan, the French consul general in Chicago, presented France's highest national award to Streeter during the ceremony in Indianapolis.



Eight decades after serving in World War I, Gus Streeter, a member of Indianapolis' Robert E. Kennington Post 34, is still hoping to receive a Purple Heart. Courtesy The Criterion

lis. French officials also honored Streeter in 1939 with the Medaille de Verdun for his courage and valor during the war.

Post 34 Director and First Vice Commander Bill Brennan, as well as fellow post members, are attempting to expedite the presentation of a Purple Heart to Streeter.

"This is a bigger issue than just handing out a medal," Brennan said. "The benefits we as veterans enjoy today, such as the VA and the GI Bill of Rights, are due to the efforts of World War I vets.

This is an important time to remember those few surviving vets, because literally, an era in military history is passing quickly. We mustn't forget what they've done for us."

Streeter joined The American Legion in June 1919 while stationed in Paris, shortly after the Legion was created there at a caucus of the American Expeditionary Forces.

Vets receive high school diplomas

Sixty years ago, many young Americans lied about their age to enlist and fight in World War II. The same thing happened a decade later during the Korean War. Many never received their high school diplomas.

Several states have rectified this situation, thanks to the efforts of Legionnaires. Earlier this year, Maine Gov. Angus King Jr. signed into law legislation granting diplomas to World War II and Korean War veterans who received honorable discharges. The impetus behind the measure came from Legionnaires at Bourque-Lanigan Post 5 in Waterville.

Nathaniel Cobb, a 57-year member of Post 5, after learning about similar legislation in Florida, decided to take action. With the help of the Maine Veterans Service, Cobb wrote two resolutions calling for the state's veterans of World War II and the Korean War to receive

their diplomas. His post supported the efforts.

At the same time, a history class from a local junior high school created a similar resolution and testified at the statehouse in favor of the legislation.

The students' bill and Cobb's resolutions were combined into one bill, which passed unanimously. The governor signed it into law in May.

Post 5 didn't stop there. They're contacting veterans who haven't received diplomas, and a formal graduation ceremony is planned for the future.

Over a dozen states have similar legislation on the books. Cobb would like to see every state follow suit.

"The value of the diploma is symbolic," Cobb says. "A grateful nation needs to publicly acknowledge veterans for the service and sacrifices they made more than a half-century ago."

Bestseller has Legion ties

Almost everyone knows a veteran or has heard a veteran's story passed down through family or friends. "Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul" is a collection of stories that came directly from veterans and their families, people who "will always be custodians of our nation's history," claim the best-selling authors Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Sidney R. Slagter. Stories by Sen. John McCain, Bob Hope, Connie Stevens, Charles Kuralt and many others are featured in this book, which is available in bookstores across the country.

The book also has a connection to The American Legion. Sixteen of the stories are written by or about Legionnaires.

According to the authors, the book represents the fulfillment of "a lifelong desire to give something back to those who gave so much for their country." They offer the book as a "small payback toward a debt that can never be fully repaid."



Reconnect effort lands 300 recruits

Just a few days before the maiden voyage of the USS *Iwo Jima* LHD7, the ship's crew and its commanding officer, Capt. John T. Nawrok, participated in a Reconnect-program visit sponsored by American Legion Department of Mississippi's 9th district and Hattiesburg, Miss., Post 24. Reconnect is an outreach program between Legionnaires and service members at military installations around the country.

Department of Mississippi officials and Post 24 members welcomed 300 young men and women into the Legion in a ceremony conducted in the hangar bay while the ship was under construction at Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss. The ceremony was hosted by Nawrok, a member of Gautier, Miss., Post 1992.

"The main goal in being there," Mississippi Department Adjutant Johnny Bracy said, "was to show our active-duty members that the Legion understands what they're going through and plans to work hard for their rights and benefits."



Hattiesburg, Miss., Post 24 Commander Len Thames presents an American Legion membership card to USS *Iwo Jima* seaman recruit Crystal Cibak during a recent Reconnect visit while the ship was under construction at Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss. Joe Kersh

Three days later in a separate event, nearly 10,000 people – many who were *Iwo Jima* survivors – attended the ship's commissioning ceremony in Pensacola, Fla. Capt. Jack H. Lucas of Hattiesburg Post 24, one of only three surviving *Iwo Jima* Medal-of-Honor recipients, was honored at the ceremony. Lucas' story appears on the mast of the *Iwo Jima*. An oil painting by retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Charles Waterhouse depicting Lucas in action will soon be

displayed in the ship's wardroom.

The principal mission of the *Iwo Jima*, the Navy's newest amphibious assault carrier, is to transport the Navy and Marine Corps to land battles, primarily as the command ship. LHDs are designed to deploy to troubled areas of the world and insert forces by helicopter and LCAC hover craft. *Iwo Jima* is fully capable of amphibious assault, advance force and special-purpose operations, as well as non-combatant evacuation and other humanitarian missions.

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The American Legion is an organization of veterans serving other veterans, their families and communities. The Legion serves as the veteran's voice in Washington, fighting for the benefits and rights of those who served our country in the armed forces.

Membership eligibility is based upon dates set forth by Congress. Eligibility dates are from 4/6/17 to 11/11/18; 12/7/41 to 12/31/46; 6/25/50 to 1/31/55; 2/28/61 to 5/7/75; 8/24/82 to 7/31/84; 12/20/89 to 1/31/90; and from 8/2/90 to present.

For information concerning membership, write The American Legion, Attn. Membership Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055; call (800) 433-3318; e-mail la@legion.org; or visit the Web site at www.legion.org/member-ship/membership.htm.

Lost WWII honor roll discovered in attic

Legionnaire Harry Kneute can testify to the truth of the adage "One man's junk is another man's treasure."

A dusty cardboard tube he found recently while cleaning out the garage attic of his daughter's Union Beach, N.J., home looked like junk but turned out to be something valuable. Kneute, a member of Keyport, N.J., Post 23, found the container among other items the previous owners had left behind. The tube contained a large white poster, yellow and crinkled with age, displaying the names of every Union Beach resident who had served in World War II. Kneute, who served in

the Korean War, made a glass case for the honor roll, printed in 1946, and presented it to the local mayor.

After researching the 349 names on the list, a local official discovered that five of the veterans were still living in Union Beach. None of the veterans had ever seen the honor roll before.

The borough plans to immortalize its World War II veterans by recreating the honor roll in bronze or brass for display at the local veterans' memorial. Borough officials said they hope the plaque will make people more aware of the sacrifices made by the nation's veterans.



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Vets dream of mobile museum from LST-325

Group hopes completion coincides with World War II Memorial.

Challenges continue for a dedicated group of U.S. Navy veterans who last year saved a 328-foot World War II Landing Ship, Tank (LST) from a Greek bone yard on Crete. The crew, whose average age exceeds 70, spent the latter part of 2000 making the amphibious LST-325 seaworthy enough for a strenuous 43-day, 6,500-mile trip across the stormy winter waters of the Mediterranean and Atlantic. With a traveling crew of 28, she finally arrived in Mobile, Ala., on Jan. 10 to await her next incarnation – a floating museum to showcase the LST's unique role in American naval history.

Getting the ship, which had been on loan to the Greek navy since 1964, back to the United States required congressional action and transfer of title from the State Department to USS LST Ship Memorial, Inc. Then came the repairs on Crete, mustering a crew of experienced LST veterans and the long trip to Alabama. If that were not enough, the biggest challenge may lie ahead: raising funds necessary to fulfill the project's bigger purpose as a real-life porthole to the past.

"Our intention is to find a permanent home port where a city could provide us free or reasonable docking space," said Bruce Voges, an Ogden, Ill., Legionnaire who at age 74 served as boat-swain's mate for last winter's transatlantic voyage. He said the non-profit corporation has been paying \$4,500 a month to dock the big craft that in World War II delivered tanks, trucks and supplies to Italy, Sicily, northern Africa and also to Omaha Beach on



Flag-waving crowds were on hand to greet the LST-325 and crew when it sailed into Mobile, Ala., last January. Steve Earley/Hampton Roads Virginian-Pilot

D-Day. In the 1950s, the LST-325 also helped construct radar outposts along the arctic coasts of Greenland and Canada. For Greece, under the name Syros L-144, she served another 35 years until a third decommission in December 1999.

Voges said that due to the LST-325's age alone, it will take between \$1 million and \$2 million for a complete restoration. The 1942-built vessel went into dry

dock last summer.

The restoration group then contracted to have the ship's hull sand-blasted, primed and painted before a September public appearance in downtown Mobile, coinciding with the U.S. LST Association's annual reunion there. "Guys from all over the country were anxious to set foot on one again," Voges said. "It's a great opportunity."

"At the moment, we're in great need of two things to accomplish our mission: funds and volunteer manpower," said Capt. Bob Jorlin, of Earlville, Ill., American Legion Post 549. He commanded the LST-325's trip last winter. "Our

funding comes entirely from private donations," he said. "Also, we need volunteers – skilled or not – to help perform work on the ship in Mobile. This work ranges from the technical to the grungy, but it all needs to be done."

LST Memorial Ship souvenirs are sold to raise funds for the project through the organization's Web site at www.lstmemoial.org, which also offers history, regular progress reports and ways people can donate or volunteer for the effort. Voges said donations may also be made directly to USS LST Ship Memorial, Inc., in care of American Savings Bank, P.O. Box 627, Danville, IL, 61834. The project is governed by a seven-member board of directors, including six from the crew of last winter's voyage.

Volunteers hope to make all the necessary mechanical repairs and replacements in the coming months, Voges said. "If we get it working right we could run this thing right up onto a beach." He said the group would love to have the project finished in time for ceremonies to commemorate the World War II Memorial in Washington. "We could take it right up the Potomac," Voges said, noting that a major corporate sponsorship is nearly essential if the LST-325 is to become the mobile maritime museum the group envisions.

– Jeff Stoffer



Ships of war on the air

■ The History Channel airs a documentary on the LST 325 and her return last winter on Veterans Day. "The Return of the LST 325" appears at 7 p.m. Eastern Time the evening of Nov. 11. Local listings may vary.

■ PBS premieres a special four-part series called "Warship" Nov. 7 and Nov. 14, chronicling 150 years of U.S. Navy technology in times of war and peace. The four hour-long programs in the series are titled "Sea Power," "Big Guns," "Submarines" and "Aircraft Carriers." Check local listings for times.

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How to use your National Reunion Registry*

The National Reunion Registry handles all reunion information services for *The American Legion Magazine*. NRR, a division of Military Information Enterprises, Inc., is a private organization that provides information about reunions, helps veterans locate old buddies and offers other special benefits to veterans and their families.

NRR maintains contact information on thousands of reunions and provides this information free of charge to veterans.

There are several ways to register reunions or check reunion listings with the National Reunion Registry. Please contact the organization directly by writing to NRR/Reunions, PO Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301, by faxing (864) 595-0813 or via e-mail at information@militaryusa.com. Due to the large number of reunions, NRR cannot accept phone requests for reunion information.

To register a reunion, you should include the complete name of the organization and branch of service with your request. The request should

also include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name and telephone number. Please also include a size estimate of the group.

Using the Internet is the quickest, most accurate way to access the reunion registry. You may check to see if your buddies are planning a reunion by visiting NRR's Web site at www.MilitaryUSA.com. To promote the best accuracy and fastest process when listing your reunion, complete the Reunion Registration Form available on the Web site.

Locating a Buddy

MilitaryUSA.com offers many services for veterans, including tips and techniques for locating current or former military members. *How To Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military: Armed Forces Locator Guide* is a practical guide to help people locate service members. The publication can be purchased by contacting MIE Publishing, P.O. Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301 or by faxing (864) 595-0813.

AIR FORCE

2nd Radio Sqn Mobile, Biloxi, MS, 4/7-10, **John Card**, (907) 229-7612, jdalas@aol.com, **3rd Strt Support Sqn**, Omaha, NE, 9/27-29, **Bill Fulmer**, (901) 755-2082, billfmlr@juno.com, **4th Tact Depot Sqn**, Denver, 7/5-8, **James Dutton**, (303) 364-3910, jamesdutton@earthlink.net, **11th Bomb Grp**, Honolulu, 12/24-12, **Alan Davis**, (918) 299-5379, adavis@tulsa.cmc.af.mil, **13th AF 42nd Bomb Grp**, Huntsville, AL, 5/23-25, **John Balfour Jr.**, (410) 922-2840, **micnar33@aol.com**, **13th Flt Sqn**, Branson, MO, November, **Jared Pohn**, (603) 836-3417, jpohn@swestnet.net, **Recon Wing**, Nashville, TN, 4/25-29, **Edward Rice**, (615) 532-6304, mildred03@juno.com, **90th Strt Recon Wing**, Branson, MO, 11/7-11, **Chuck Lake**, (785) 865-5794, cnlake@gateway.net, **91st Strt Recon Wing**, Colorado Springs, CO, 4/18-21, **Ronald R. Day**, (303) 795-8232

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1095th Spec Reporting Sqn, Albuquerque, NM, 5/16-19, **Jim May**, (505) 299-5548, swp1095th@aol.com, **ArcLight/Younger Crew**, San Antonio, 2/21-24, **Earl Flora**, (402) 291-1099, elflora@aol.com, **EC-47 Assn**, **360th-352nd Tact Electronics Warfare Sqn** and **6994th Sqn**, Charleston, SC, 5/14-16, **James Wheeler**, (601) 754-3507, jcw@earthlink.net, **Navigator Class 52**, Colorado Springs, CO, 8/28-31, **Lowell Strong**, (910) 398-3808, imstrong@mcledusa.net, **OCS Class 59A**, San Antonio, 4/15-20, **Don Weber**, (352) 365-0031, djandweber@cs.com, **Pilot Class 430**, Dallas, 4/24-27, **George Savage**, (817) 244-5600, gisavage23@aol.com, **Pilot Class 52F**, Winter Haven, FL, 9/10-14, **Gene Rogge**, (321) 777-0716, rogge@palmett.net, **Pilot Class 58B**, Lakeland, CA, 4/14, **Claron Jorgensen**, (415) 924-1345, **Pilot Class 58B**, Las Vegas, 9/2-5, **Harold Stein**, halstein@msn.com, **Pleiku AB**, Pittsburgh, 12/9-16, **Tom Rushenok**, (724) 334-9445, trush@usa.net, **TAC Tanners**, Hampton, VA, 5/15-21, **Nate Hill**, (410) 653-3833, nathill@earthlink.net, **Tactankers**, com USAG Aggressors, Las Vegas, 7/19-21, **Gregory Wood**, (702) 642-6827, gregory.wood@nellis.af.mil, nellis.af.mil

ARMY

1st Arm Div, Milwaukee, 8/22-25, **Joseph Thrett**, (707) 373-0901, 1starda@aol.com, **3rd Inf Div 15th Inf Rgt**, Ft. Co., Daytona Beach, FL, 11/4-8, **Donald Samsala**, 651-429-1634, dronse@aol.com, **4th Arm Div 66th Arm Div 2nd Medium Tact Bn**, Dallas, 11/23-25, **Rex Seaton**, (214) 691-8261, rsseaton@aol.com, **6th Med Depot Korea**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 11/1-11, **Nick Mullins**, (910) 867-4292, mpmacak@aol.com, **14th Field Hosp**, Baltimore, 6/28-30, **Charles Fahl**, (915) 595-7355, charlie911@webtv.net, **17th Sig Bn**, Williamsburg, VA, 9/18-21, **Henri Kallmure**, (954) 698-5981, willmehur@worldnet.att.net, henri.kallmure@worldnet.att.net

25th MP Sqn, Minneapolis, 9/6-7, **Dennis Soblack**, (218) 493-4529, **29th Radio Mobile Sqn**, Biloxi, MS, 11/11-12, **Bob Rennick**, (413) 435-0555, rennick@vnet.net, **371st Sig Bn**, Phoenix, 11/23-25, **Robert Fash**, (520) 606-3921, hob1010@aol.com, **43rd Div Band**, Rocky Hill, CT, 6/14-16, **Mario De Capua**, (860) 356-1558, amms5@webtv.net, **45th Sure Hosp**, Rockville, MD, 11/11, **Bradley Burns**, (419) 289-4942, rockytop80@earthlink.net, **56th Gen Hosp**, Baltimore, 6/28-30, **Charles Fahl**, (219) 595-7355, charlie911@webtv.net, **69th Arm Rgt Assn**, Seattle, July, **James Walker**, (504) 774-1007, ricw169@aol.com, **71st Army Band**, Tampa, FL, 4/4-8, **Avrine Kindinger**, (419) 562-872, avdrine@cybercity.net, **73rd Tank Bn 73rd Army**, Colorado Springs, CO, 4/25-28, **Curtis Banker**, (518) 643-2302

88th Army Ground Forces Band, 1/24-27, **Orlando, FL**, **Light Inf Bde**, Arlington, VA, 5/24-27, **Peter Jordanides**, (703) 448-0199, brigade199@att.net, **332nd Med Bde**, Nashville, TN, 5/3-5, **Ben Story**, (870) 633-6402, bstory@ipa.net, **425th MP Escort Guard Co**, Charlotte, NC, 11/9-10, **Louis Henderson**, (904) 641-5250, loisusepdy@aol.com, **459th Sig Bn**, Washington, 11/11, **Howard Bartholf**, (410) 740-7622, **501st Avn Bn 71st Assault Hel Co A Co**, "Rattlers" and "Firebirds", St. Louis, 5/2-5, **Ron Seabolt**, (972) 524-9033, rattler1@rattlers.org, **527th Pers Serv Co**, New Orleans, 11/2-4, **Richard Furman**, (321) 356-4976, rafurman@bigplanet.net, **530th FA Bn**, Branson, MO, 11/1-5, **George Robinson**, (856) 589-1039, closure@prodigy.net

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MARINES

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NAVY
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USS AKA, AKB 3, Boston, April, **John Green**, (617) 524-3990, ussaka@yaho.com, **USS Audrain**, APA 59, Dayton, OH, 5/2-4, **Forrest Lanham**, (217) 748-6845, ussaudrain@aol.com, **USS Barney**, DDG 6, Norfolk, VA, 6/14-16, **John Van Dusen**, (972) 242-6475, cakings@prodigy.net, **USS Bigelow**, DD 942, Jacksonville Beach, FL, 4/10-14, **Frank Calandrino**, (201) 818-9668, frankcalan@aol.com, **USS Blakely**, FF-1272, Charleston, SC, 7/18-21, **Merle Houk**, (724) 523-2299, mhouk20@hotmail.com, **USS Boston**, CAGB CAGB SN703, New London, CT, 11/8-20, **Arthur Hebert**, (803) 672-8772, ahhebert@earthlink.net, **Bowditch**, AGS 4, Portsmouth, VA, 4/19-21, **Paul McCue**, (716) 223-7144, pmccue@juno.com, **USS Cadmus**, AR 13, San Antonio, 5/16-19, **Robert Baschmann**, (716) 655-5415, happeeapace@aol.com, **USS Capodanno**, FF 1093, Jacksonville, FL, 8/31-92, **Michael Ryder**, (904) 277-3152, usn1093@aol.com

USS Cascade, AD 16, Niagara Falls, NY, 8/11-18, **Lyle Burchette**, (414) 334-5627, USSCharlesH.Roan, DD 853, Norfolk, VA, 4/4-6, **Tom Van Petten**, (757) 436-3007, USSCharlesP.Cecil, DD 08R 855, Minneapolis, 5/11-12, **Ed Nelson**, (715) 825-3252, ednelson@planetdial.com, **USS Conyngham**, DD 317/DDE 17, Tampa, FL, 5/1-6, **Len Gordon**, (732) 432-0588, ddgusboat@aol.com, **USS Crescent City**, APA 21, New Orleans, 12/6-10, **Bill Vumberlock**, (860) 376-5577, billv16@juno.com, **USS Cumberland Sound**, AV 17, San Antonio, September, **Arthur Sadel**, (501) 844-3583, sadel@earthlink.net, **USS David R. Ray**, DD 871, Everett, WA, 2/25-3/2, **Steve Korpal**, (825) 982-0962, skorpal@wildcat.com, **USS Denver**, LPD 9, San Antonio, 1/18-20, **Paul Hoffman**, (831) 663-0523, hoffman_usn@juno.com

USS Denver, LPD 20, Branson, MO, May, **Bill Gibson**, (573) 244-6598, usden@msn.com, **USS Drew**, APA 162, Columbia, MD, 5/31-6/3, **Richard Reinstein**, (410) 653-1391, plasticman200@hotmail.com, **USS Earle B. Hall**, APD 107, Baltimore, 4/18-21, **Robert Grimm**, (414) 421-8436, rgirrim@mlwpc.com, **USS Electra**, AKA 4,

Portland, ME, 9/11, Wayland Marders, (703) 830-8191; **USS Farragut, DLG 6**, Evansville, IN, 6/6-8, Gary Jennings, gene.jennings@verizon.net; **USS Frontier, AD 25**, Tucson, AZ, 11/8-11, Joseph Dean, (401) 348-8882, jms0705@aol.com; **USS Fulton, AS 11**, Sacramento, CA, September, Ray Wilson, (925) 513-9271, raydlo@packbell.net; **USS Harry E. Hubbard, AD 748**, Nashville, TN, 5/15-19, J. Gill, (727) 927-9448, tewaka@cs.com; **USS Haynsworth, DD 700**, Portsmouth, NH, 11/1-4, Bill Morton, (217) 324-4414, golfxer@attchill.net; **USS Jason, ARN 11AR 8**, Las Vegas, 5/6-8, Clyde Tracy, (732) 727-4040, usslason@yahoo.com; **USS Kearny, DD 432**, Savannah, GA, 11/5-7, Thomas Barrett, (828) 369-6950, dtdan@smrnet.net; **USS Kenneth D. Bailey, DD/DR 713**, Mobile, AL, April, Robert Levine, (617) 327-3286, rhl713@aol.com

USS Kepler, DD/DDE 765, Milwaukee, 5/30-6/2, Willard Darrell, (631) 586-4565; **USS LST 485**, Kansas City, MO, June, Larry Patterson, (602) 473-2706, patterson@hum-boldt.com; **USS Luzon, ARG 2**, Pensacola, FL, 11/8-12, Charles Mitchell, (845) 692-5760, usschief@frontiernet.net; **USS Malabar, AF 37**, Wheeling, WV, 6/21-23, Dean Wise, (304) 485-2783, wiseaf37@aol.com; **USS Marian, AO 57**, San Antonio, 5/16-19, Ray Bower, (863) 676-6740; **USS Marvin H. McIntyre, APA 129**, Laughlin, NV, 11/13-14, Kenneth Schneider, (407) 843-2610; **USS Mona Island, Virginia Beach, VA**, 10/9-11, William Bunte, (908) 467-4641; **USS Mount Baker, AE 4 AE 34**, San Diego, 3/16-19, Dale Bradford, (760) 740-9710, debrad@sdc.quik.com; **USS Nantahala, AO 60**, San Antonio, 5/16-19, Jack Gibbs, (734) 455-9306, jgibbs@mediaone.net

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USS Yellowstone, AD 27, Atlantic Beach, FL, 1/10-13, Paul Bowen, (352) 854-1387, bowp@worldnet.att.net; **VB-14VPB-102**, Boston, September, Robert Kirk, (619) 582-8485, bobkirk@aol.com; **VF/VAF/VFA-113 Stingers**, Virginia Beach, VA, 4/25-29, Carleton Cooper, (703) 532-0559, crooper@starpower.net; **VPB-25**, Tucson, AZ, 4/11-14, Edgar Josephsen, (360) 387-2727, vpb25@camano.net

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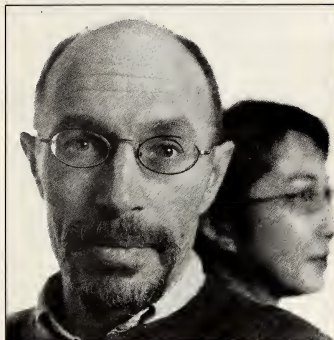
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115th FA Bn, Ft. Rucker, Ala. Harry Anthos needs anyone who served with him between January and February 1945 to verify he was exposed to mustard gas prior to boarding a ship for transit to ETO at Camp Sibert, Ala. CID 1430



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Co 859, Little Rock, Ark. George G. Younger needs anyone who went through Navy basic training with him at San Diego in October 1951 to verify his knee was injured by a rock thrown by another seaman. CID 1435

IN SEARCH OF

Anyone who served with the 84th Eng Const Bn in Korea between 1953 and 1954, contact Craig Fuhrmann, 2301 N. Mason St., Appleton, WI 54914 or call (920) 739-1981.

Anyone who served with the 162nd Tank Bn, 4th Armored Grp in the Pacific during WWII, contact Nat Sanders, 255 A Doremus Drive, Monroe Township, NJ 08831 or call (609) 860-5288.

Anyone who served aboard the USS Tolland, AKA 64, during World War II, contact Jack Wylie, 2611 Dellwood Drive, Smyrna, TN 37167 or call (615) 223-0766.

Anyone who served with the 634th AAA AW Bn, C Btry between 1943 and 1945, contact John A. Pacella, 8 Woodship Square, North Attleboro, MA 02760 or call (508) 699-3709.

Anyone who served as a Navy Teleman with formal training or as a striker, contact Jim Shellhammer, 4341 Edwinstown Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80907, call (719) 598-5615 or e-mail coshell@offsetspringnet.net.

Anyone who served with the 21st Evac Hosp in Pusan, Korea, between 1952 and July 1953, contact Stanley McCullough Jr., 27 N. Emily St., Pittsburgh, PA 15205 or call (412) 922-2484.

Anyone who served with D 6, 1/20th, 11th Light Inf Bde, Americal Div Duc Pho, Vietnam, contact Jason Wright at (831) 724-9843 or e-mail webstage@yahoo.com.

Any Marines who served with Scott Bombers 151 on Engebli Island, Eniwetok Atoll, in 1944, contact Jim Fisher, 2623 Cryer St., Hayward, CA 94545, call (510) 782-1109 or e-mail rjimfisher@aol.com.

Anyone who served aboard the USS Haulback, SS 352, contact Joe Heygi, 835 Rossiere Place, Crown Point, IN 46307, call (219) 661-0715 or e-mail sailor@jorsm.com.

Anyone who served with the 47th Eng Camouflage Bn at Ft. Riley, Kan., between November 1950 and November 1952, contact Howard Mattison, 5542 Moor Drive, Lincoln, NE 68516 or e-mail howmat23@aol.com.

Anyone who served with the 617th FA Obsn Bn during the

Po Valley Campaign in Italy in 1945, contact Henry A. Steiger, 121 Johnston's Lane, Mercesburg, PA 17236 or call (717) 328-3511.

Anyone who served with the 8th AF, 384th Bomb Grp, 546th Sqdn on E-7 Aces and Ates, including the crew that parachuted over Munich, Germany, contact Edward McDonald, 7030 Radbourne Road, Upper Darby, PA 19082 or call (610) 626-7186.

Anyone who served aboard the USS Yellowstone, AD 27, between March 1955 and January 1959, contact Frank J. Guarno Sr., Hopedew Junction, NY 12533 or e-mail mrguayv5@aol.com.

Anyone who served with Tank Co, 10th Inf Div, 86th Inf Rgt (Gyroscope) in Germany between July 1955 and November 1955, contact Roland E. Hansen, Box 363, Elk Horn, IA 51531, call (712) 764-2052 or e-mail rehansen@metc.net, or Ben Gallagher, 111 Trudt Court, Hanover, PA 17331, call (717) 637-1862 or e-mail rebelle@blazenet.net.

Anyone who served with BTU Flight 985, 3704th Tng Sqdn at Lackland AFB between March and May 1951 or the 35th Motor Vehicle Sqdn at Johnson AFB, Japan, between 1950 and 1955, contact Bill Meniam, 1868 Baxter Way, Upland, CA 91784 or e-mail (909) 985-4748.

Anyone who went through basic training with Plt 247 at Daoud MCRD between July and September 1953, contact Omer Ledbetter, 9816 E. 116th St., Buby, OK 74008.

Anyone who served with the 91st AAA AW Bn (M), HQ Btry, in Ludwigsburg, Germany, between 1950 and 1954, contact Dick Johnson, 102 Irwin Circle, Calamus, IA, 52729 or call (563) 246-2206, or Don Ambrose, 1929 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS 67218 or call (316) 662-9644.

Anyone who served with the 6811th, 6812th and 6813th Sig Sec Detachments, ETOUSA, in Germany between 1943 and 1945, contact R. "Bob" Frederickson, 3810 Manor Drive, Greensboro, NC 27403 or call (336) 299-1611.

Anyone who served in IX Corp 212th MP in Korea between 1952 and 1953, contact Abraham Spies, 2301 51st St., #13, Lubbock, TX 79412, call (806) 793-0936 or e-mail queenie3347@aol.com.

Anyone who served with CASU 76 at Arlington Naval Air Station on Kailashvatu Island, Naval Air Station, Washington during WWII, contact Doane L. Morfenson, 22541 435th Ave., Howard, SD 57349 or call (605) 772-5235.

Anyone who served with the 74th Coast Art (AA) Rgt during WWII or the 74th AAA Gun Bn after WWII, contact Al Greene, 765 Gates Lane, Kodak, TN 37764 or call (865) 932-7719.

Anyone who served with G Co, 315th Inf, 79th Inf Rgt or was a POW during the Battle of the Bulge between January and May 1945, contact Louise Nestico, 738 Chestnut St., Kulpmont, PA 17834 or call (570) 717-3036.

Anyone who served with A Co, 1st Mar, 1st Mar Div (FMF) or E Co, 2nd Bn, 9th Mar, 3rd Mar Div (FMF) in Vietnam between 1964 and 1965, contact Craig Fuhrmann, 2301 N. Mason St., Appleton, WI 54914 or call (920) 739-1981.

Anyone who was a patient of Hospital Ward 110 at Trux Field, Wis., between May and October 1944, contact Judge Newt Draheim, Box 42, Clarion, IA 50525.

Anyone who served as staff or student at the Underwater Swimmers School at Key West, Fla., contact Don Stone, 1440 S.W. 5th Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33432, call (561) 391-6727 or e-mail stonefish@gcs.com.

Anyone who served aboard the USS Hitchhik, ATF 103, between December 1952 and September 1953, contact Raymond L. Black, 107 Wilford Road, Silver Lake, WA 98645 or e-mail sparkle75@juno.com.

Anyone who served aboard the USS President Adams, AP 38/APA 19, between November 1941 and June 1950, contact John H. Ward, 1716 Appleby Lane, Harvey, LA 70058 or e-mail presadams@aol.com.

Anyone who served in the U.S. Navy Tug Fleet at Mare Island, Vallejo, Calif., between 1952 and 1954, contact Gene Glasco, 211 72nd St., Virginia Beach, VA 23451 or e-mail sglassco@aol.com.

Anyone who served with the 92nd Eng Searchlight Co in Korea between 1949 and 1950 or the 44th Tank Bn in September 1949, contact Carl Rife, 3280 Alpena St., Burton, MI 48529 or call (810) 743-0319.

Anyone who served with the 3750th Air Installation Sqdn at Sheppard AFB between September 1948 and June 1950, contact Charles Fiore at (215) 687-1955.

Anyone who served with the 77th Inf Div, 307th Rgt between 1944 and 1945 and participated on the Maeda Escarpment on Okinawa, contact Desmond T. Doss, 4600 Highway 157, Rising Fawn, GA 30738, call (706) 399-0485 or e-mail dtidos@gcs.com.

Anyone who served with the 3rd Army, 15th Corp, 4049th OMT Truck Co between 1943 and 1945, contact Joe Williams, 15212 12th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98155 or



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Anyone who served in an Army Postal Unit in Korea during the 1970s or at the Armed Forces Courier Station Rhein Main between 1983 and 1986, contact Charles J. Dwyer, 624 Casa Grande Drive, Melbourne, FL 32940 or call (321) 242-3377.

Anyone who served in the USNAS Disbursing Office at Hutchinson, Kan., between June 1952 and April 1954, contact Robert Sheik, R.R. 1 Box 13, Weatherford, OK 73096 or call (580) 343-2463.

Anyone who served with the 11th Abn. 89th FA, B Btry at Ft. Campbell, Ky., in 1953 or the 82nd Abn. 93rd FA, B Btry at Ft. Bragg, N.C., in 1954, contact Eugene C. Batten, 208 Capehart St., Spencer, WV 25276 or (304) 927-5368.

Anyone who served with the 33rd Inf Rgt Cbt Team at Panama Canal, contact Rick Ryan at (518) 541-3891 or e-mail dolphindriver38@yahoo.com.

Anyone who served with the U.S. Navy Armed Guards during World War II, contact A. Bridger, 62 Strathmore Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34233, call (941) 377-0954 or e-mail live711@aol.com.

Anyone who served with the 506th MP Bn, contact Richard Jones, P.O. Box 231, Arlington, NE 68002, call (402) 478-4785 or e-mail hanh@mail.psu.edu or rich11@psu.edu.

Anyone who served with JASCO 3, 3rd Mar, in Guadalcanal prior to the Timian Island invasion, contact Phil Goldstein at (215) 698-9671 or e-mail jasco3@aol.com.

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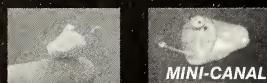
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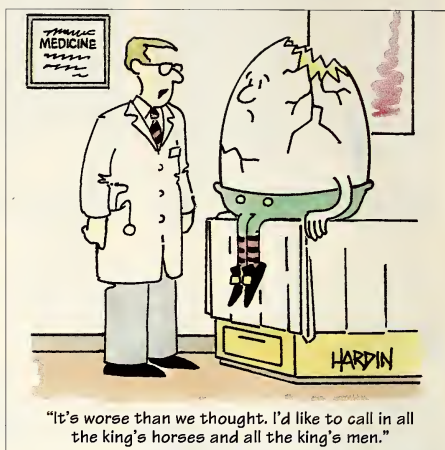
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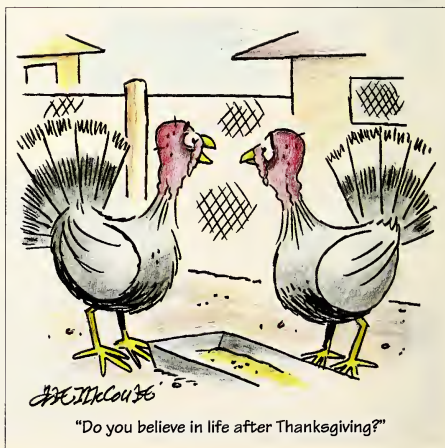
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OF THESE CANCERS**

For Medical Resources:

Visit the Mesothelioma Web: www.mesotheliomaweb.org/n4658
or call toll-free **1-877-367-6376** to receive a free packet or to ask
questions. (Packet includes information on mesothelioma treatment, clinical
trials, cancer links, how to access legal and financial resources, and frequently
asked questions with answers by the law firm below.)

For Information on Compensation from the Asbestos Industry:

Law Offices of Jonathan David, P.C.*

10655 Six Pines Drive, #260

The Woodlands, TX 77380

(Greater Houston Area)

Handling cases nationwide with
local counsel in state of filing.

www.asbestos-attorney.com/n4658



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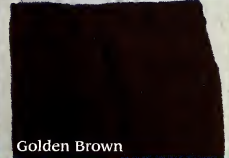
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